

10p
EVERY
SUMMER
MONDAY



THE TIMES GREAT SPORT

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DAY ONE OF A NEW SERIES

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Briton tells how flash flood killed eight in Oman



Victim Andy Deller

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

AN INJURED British woman yesterday described how an expedition to explore a dry river bed in Oman, known as "wadi-bashing", turned into a disaster when a flash flood swept members of her group from the side of a deep gorge, killing five Britons, two Americans and a Dutch woman.

Sally Whitmore, 28, who suffered a head injury, said from her hospital bed: "It was a torrential wall of water... the worst experience I have ever had."

Mrs Whitmore, from Bourne

End, Buckinghamshire, was being helped to safety by two fellow Britons about 600ft down Wadi Bani Ouf, also known as Snake Gorge, when they were washed away. Her rescuers were named as Andy Deller, 34, a former soldier, from Eastbourne, East Sussex, and Bill Love, 28, from Glasgow. Both were single and worked in the Gulf state. A third casualty was named as Karen Salt, whose family lives in Oman, but the identities of the other two Britons were still unknown last night, when all but one body had been recovered.

Mrs Whitmore's husband, Steve,

42, was among the survivors who were trapped for more than two hours before they could make their way to safety and alert rescuers.

The disaster happened on Friday. Four groups of 26 hikers made their way down the narrow gorge. Mrs Whitmore's group was the first to begin the almost three-hour descent, having driven to the top in two cars after parking their other vehicles in the wadi. They later allowed another group to overtake them, however.

Mrs Whitmore said in the Khoula Hospital in Muscat that the day had been hot and sunny when they set off, adding: "There was no indication of a storm to come. Part of the way down we could hear thunder and there were spots of rain. Three of the party decided to go on ahead to get back to our cars. About ten minutes after they left, the water began gushing down on us. We tried to scramble to higher ground to huddle together to keep warm. My husband tried to get back up but couldn't. He was being washed away but grasped on to the rocks where we were."

The party that had been earlier allowed to overtake was washed away by the force of the water.

After the water subsided the survivors managed to get back to their cars. With the help of a local guide they reached the town of Rustaq, where they alerted the Royal Oman Police and British Embassy about eight hours after the disaster.

After being examined at the local hospital survivors were transferred the 100 miles to Muscat. Ben Lyster-Binns, spokesman for the British Embassy in Muscat, said: "It was a localised flash flood which just tragically happened to sweep down the gorge. The Royal Oman police have been excellent in mounting the search and rescue operation."

Before moving to the Middle East, Mr Deller served with the Royal Anglian Regiment for 17 years, travelling the world and achieving the rank of colour sergeant.

His brother David, 43, said: "Andy had a week's holiday and a party had gone up there. I understand that Andy got four of the party and himself on to a rock as they were being swept down the ravine and was just pulling his friend up when more water came down and washed them away."

"That was my brother. He was a search and rescue operation."

Too easy degrees 'lowering standards'

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

FEARS of a slide in university standards were fuelled yesterday by a study showing a dramatic rise in the proportion of top degrees over the past 20 years.

Nearly six out of every ten recent graduates gained a first or upper second class degree at the traditional universities compared to four in ten in the 1970s.

The most striking change has been in history, with a 50 per cent rise in upper second class degrees. There were also big increases in first class degrees given for mathematics and physics, up from 12 per cent of students in each discipline to 20 and 22 per cent respectively.

George Walden, MP, a former higher education minister, said yesterday that such steep "grade inflation" masked real improvements and threatened to damage the value of a British degree. But leading academics defended the rise as a fair reflection of improving achievement.

Results in eight popular

subjects for 300,000 students at the pre-1992 universities were analysed between 1973 and 1993 for the Higher Education Quality Council, which will publish the detailed findings later this summer. The findings, for a period when student numbers more than doubled, exclude the former polytechnics which gained university status in the 1990s.

Overall, the proportion of students receiving first class degrees rose from 11 to 14 per cent, and those gaining an upper second (2.1) from 31 to 44 per cent.

Professor Keith Chapman, of Aberdeen University, who carried out the research, said: "This raises lots of questions which need answering. The assumption is that it is a confirmation of falling standards. I think that is probably part of it but there are other ways of answering this, including better teaching and changing methods of assessment."

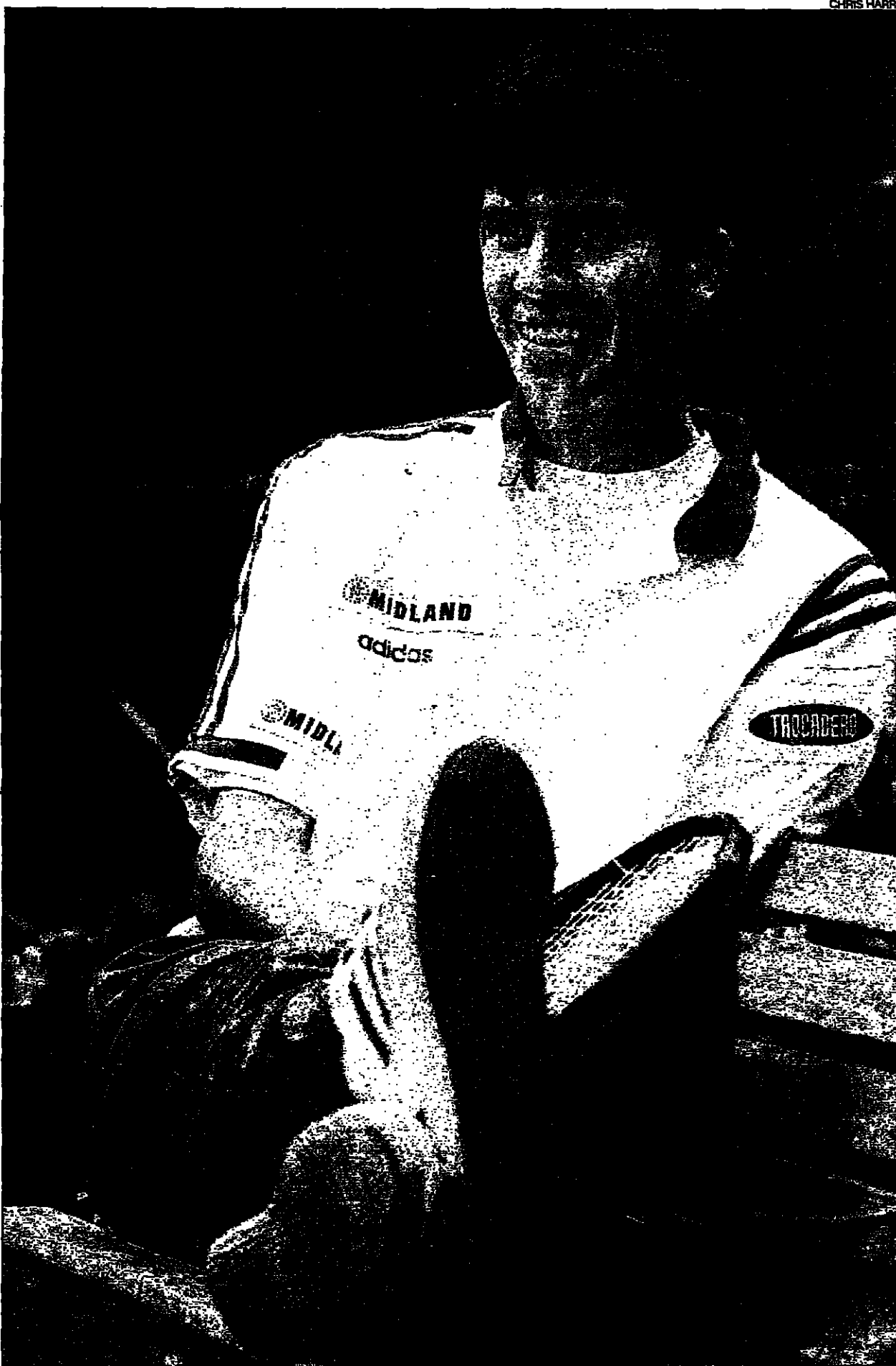
Mr Walden said: "I would be very surprised if the improvement were at that level."

He said grade inflation was not surprising given successive rises in A level and GCSE results, adding: "It is possible both to have an improvement and to have inflation, but any inflation is disastrous. If you are going to dilute the one part of the British education system which stands up to international comparison, you are doing it a great disservice."

The Times disclosed in May that some overseas governments, including Singapore and Malaysia, operated "whitelists" of approved universities in some subjects.

Continued on page 2, col 3

Leading article, page 23



Tim Henman, who hopes to beat Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden at Wimbledon today and become the first Briton to reach the men's singles quarter-finals in 23 years. Medical Briefing, page 11; Wimbledon, pages 34, 35

Hill pulls away from rivals with victory in France

By JOHN GOODBODY, SPORTS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

DAMON HILL stretched his lead in the Formula One world championship to 25 points yesterday when he won the French Grand Prix at Magny-Cours, after the engine of Michael Schumacher, his great German rival, blew up on the warm-up lap.

Hill's team-mate, Jacques Villeneuve, followed the Briton home, 8.1 seconds behind him. It was the fourth time this season that Williams-Renault have taken the top two places. In the world championship standings, Hill has 63 points, Villeneuve 38 and Schumacher 26.

Hill said afterwards that he was "stunned but delighted" by his victory. "You get prepared for the race, you go through all the permutations and then Michael goes off on the parade lap in front of you. It is not what you expect."

"It clearly changed my thinking for the race. But I still had to make a good start and it's easy to get distracted when something like that happens. It made my race easier, but I was a bit worried because the engine blew up in a big way

and left a huge oil slick and I had to back off because it was spraying on to my visor," Hill said.

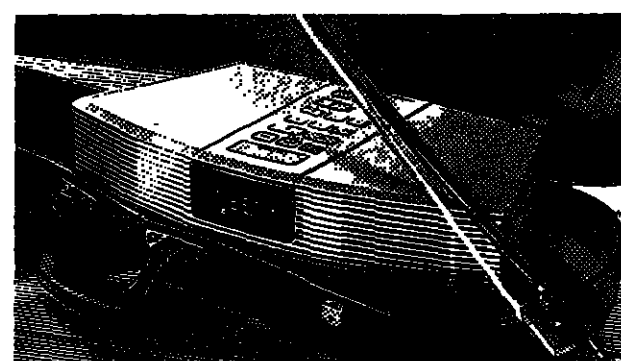
Schumacher, twice world champion and the fastest qualifier in practice, said he had thought that Ferrari would have problems with the car's reliability at the start of the season. "Instead, we are encountering problems now. But we must grit our teeth and continue to push on."

Jean Alesi and Gerhard Berger came third and fourth in their Benetton while the remaining championship points were taken by Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard, both in McLarens.

Johnny Herbert, of Britain, was disqualified from eleventh place when stewards discovered that his Sauber-Ford car had broken technical regulations. His deflector panels on the aerodynamic bodywork of the car were 15cm too high.

The next race is the British Grand Prix at Silverstone on July 14.

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A woman's place in the Test Match commentary team

By EMMA WILKINS

THE daughter of Dennis Potter was tipped yesterday to become the BBC's first woman cricket commentator.

Sarah Potter, 34, daughter of the late playwright, is delighted that the BBC has decided to recruit more women sports commentators. A former England women's cricket all-rounder, Ms Potter said she would love to join the Test Match Special team for sticky buns and ball-by-ball analysis in the Radio 4 com-

mentary box. "I think it's a wonderful idea in principle and not before its time. There's no reason why a woman can't commentate on the men's game so long as she has good knowledge and a passion for cricket."

Ms Potter, who has already commented on cricket for Sky television, scored a century against India in the women's Test of 1986. She now runs her father's television production company from her home in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. "I used to talk to Dad

about getting more involved in cricket broadcasting and he thought it would be a good thing to do. It makes me smile now because I said it would never happen."

The current Test Match Special team is made up of Jonathan Agnew, Christopher Martin-Jenkins and Henry Blofeld. Their discussions often range beyond cricket to the activities of the crowd or the direction of passing pigeons. Schoolboy pranks, such as asking an important question just as a colleague takes a

large mouthful of sticky bun, sent as tea-time treats by a keen female radio audience, have largely passed away with their chief proponent, Brian Johnston.

Peter Baxter, the producer of Test Match Special, which includes the Prime Minister among its fans, said he was willing to invite a woman into the commentary box if a vacancy arose and she knew as much about cricket as the men. "If I were looking for any commentators then a woman would be nice," he said.



Sarah Potter: delighted

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POP

Caitlin Moran on modern music and musicians
PLUS: The Education pages

SATURDAY

EVERY DAY THIS WEEK: COLLECT TOKENS FOR OUR CRICKET TICKET OFFER

Redwood enters fray over MoD home

BY ALICE THOMSON, POLITICAL REPORTER

JOHN REDWOOD intervened last night in the deepening dispute over the Government's proposal to sell Armed Forces accommodation, with an appeal for ministers to draw up a deal with rebel MPs.

Mr Redwood said that tenants should not be moved out of their homes against their will.

In what will be seen as a clash with Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, the failed Tory leadership contender called on ministers to prevent a damaging revolt by reaching a compromise.

Tory backbenchers were furious yesterday that ministers appeared to have backed down on assurances that married personnel would not be forced out of their homes by the £1.6 billion sell-off.

Last week John Major made

it clear that families would not be made to move from the 58,000 homes being offered to developers. The homes would be rented back by the Ministry of Defence.

But yesterday James Arbuthnot, the Defence Procurement Minister, would only say: "No family will be forced to move without being given comparable accommodation. Service families are used to moving every two or three years as part of the requirements of the job."

Backbenchers retaliated by saying that unless the Government took the plans back to the drawing board, they would join forces with the Labour front bench which is opposed to the sell-off.

Mr Redwood pointed out that the homes could still be sold to the private sector with a written agreement that the

tenant should not be evicted. "The Government could then raise the money while making sure that the tenant is not badly treated," he said.

Mr Redwood's aides made it clear that he had not signed the Commons early day motion condemning the move last week in case it was interpreted as a slight against Mr Portillo. But they said Mr Redwood felt keenly that the Government should "honour those who served the Crown".

Potential rebels are to meet Mr Portillo on Wednesday to argue their case. If they cannot make him change his mind, they are hoping that a stalling amendment to the Housing Bill in the House of Lords next week will be successful. Also, Labour have promised to try to force a vote on the issue before the summer recess.

Jonathan Aitken, the former



Portillo: to meet the rebels this week

Defence Minister, fuelled the argument yesterday by accusing the rebels of pursuing a personal attack on Mr Portillo. Mr Aitken made it clear that he thought some of the 60 Tory backbenchers who

signed a Commons motion last week condemning the privatisation were trying to ruin Mr Portillo's political career.

"There is a sort of slight game of Portillo-bashing in some quarters. Some people may be playing that game and I would regret that if it was true. There is an anxiety in the corridors of Westminster that one or two of them have joined in because it makes life difficult for Michael Portillo," he said.

"Mr Portillo's plans are admirable. The status quo is virtually indefensible because of the unacceptably high number of empty houses and houses in poor condition. The sale will enable money to be spent on upgrading."

The leading rebels over the privatisation have been Julian Brazier and Iain Duncan-Smith, both supporters of Mr Redwood, who is Mr Portillo's

most obvious right-winger for the Tory leadership. Mr Portillo's Liberal Democrat spokesman on defence, said: "Mr Aitken is an extraordinary admission. It will be deeply damaging to service morale that the sale of the married quarters of the Armed Services has become an issue between the rival Redwood and Portillo camps."

"The Tory party should be concentrating on the welfare of our forces and not the welfare of its post-election leadership contenders."

Mr Brazier, Tory MP for Canterbury, last night denied the attacks were personal. He said that the 60 signatories had come from all sides of the party. "I have been speaking up for the Royal British Legion and the Army Families Federation for years and have absolutely no interest in 'bashing' Michael Portillo," he said.

Labour NEC seeks power to remove disloyal MPs

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR Party chiefs are planning to assume new powers to silence dissenting MPs who consistently speak out against Tony Blair or his policies. Discontent over Mr Blair's allegedly authoritarian style of leadership and his determination to modernise policy risks overshadowing Thursday's launch of Labour's draft manifesto.

Labour's ruling body is planning to seek powers allowing it to block troublesome MPs from being re-elected. MPs who repeatedly criticised Mr Blair or party policy during a Labour administration might not be endorsed by the National Executive Committee for re-election at the next general election.

At present the NEC can withhold endorsement once a candidate has been selected but does not have powers to impose or block shortlists apart from exceptional cases.

The proposed new powers, which would also apply to new candidates seeking selection, would have to be approved by the party conference. "There must be a minimum requirement in terms of behaviour," said a party spokesman. "If this is clearly breached the NEC would have a reserve power not to re-endorse."

The move will fuel the party rebellion prompted by Mr Blair's plan to hold a referendum on a Scottish parliament and his decision to abandon Labour's commitment to improve the basic state pension. At the weekend, two more

backbenchers spoke out. Tony Banks, MP for Newham North West joined Paul Flynn, MP for Newport, in warning Mr Blair against imposing new policy without consultation.

"Our willingness to win shouldn't be taken as a licence by the leadership to walk all over us. If you dump on your friends when the going gets tough they don't deliver," said Mr Banks. Speaking on ITV's *Crosstalk*, Mr Banks said that the party had moved so far to the right that it could no longer be described as socialist but was becoming more like "a model two Conservative party."

Mr Flynn has written to Mr Blair, accusing new Labour of "hypocrisy and naked opportunism". Mr Flynn yesterday denied that he was threatening to quit the party and said he would continue to speak out about his concerns. He was not concerned about the new powers the NEC was seeking. "I have an inveterate habit of telling the truth, which I will continue to do."

Today Harriet Harman, the Shadow Health secretary, will make Labour's last policy announcement before the draft manifesto is published with a pledge to transfer £100 million spent on NHS bureaucracy to fund 100,000 operations. Ms Harman will announce that Labour will impose a new ceiling on management costs.

Peter Riddell, page 22



A wrecked vehicle in Snake Gorge, Oman, after the flood that killed five Britons

Britons killed in Oman

Continued from page 1

courageous and brave man. He was always very active and a keen sportsman. He was very well thought of by everyone that knew him. I am heartbroken."

Mr Decker, a businessman, said that Rachel Elson, his brother's girlfriend, had been due to fly to Oman last week but had to cancel the trip because she had been unable to get on a return flight. Miss Elson, who works for Virgin Atlantic at Gatwick Airport, was being comforted by friends last night at her home in Lindfield, Sussex.

Those who died left Muscat during the Islamic weekend on Friday for a one-day trek to Snake Gorge, whose stark

beauty makes it popular with walkers. "It is an extremely harsh, mountainous environment of stark beauty on a great scale," said a British diplomat who has trekked through the gorge. "It is narrow and very rocky. In parts, you have to be reasonably fit to do it."

Wadi-bashing is one of the most popular activities of the hundreds of expatriates and growing numbers of tourists to the Gulf State. Wadis fan out from spectacular ravines in the Jabel Akhdar or Green Mountains, which surround the populated Northern coast of Oman and the arid desert of the Wahiba sands. The Omani Government is now gradually encouraging tour-

ism to the gorges, ravines and oases around Rustaq, where the accident happened.

Until 1970, when Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, English educated and a graduate of Sandhurst ousted his repressive father, Oman was one of the least known and most isolated countries in the world. Now, apart from several hundred foreign, mainly British, workers the number of tourists is growing steadily as the country gradually increases its hotel and tourist facilities. Tour operators such as British Airways Holidays and Tour Worldwide, now take hundreds of holidaymakers a month to the luxury hotels in Muscat before taking them on organised visits.

Fears of fall in university degree standards

Continued from page 1

because of fears of falling standards. However, Professor Jonathan Steinberg, chairman of the history faculty at Cambridge, said: "I have been in this business 30 years and there has been absolutely no diminution of what we offer."

He added: "A-level results have gone up and up to you and have to have at least three Bs to get into university for history now. The result is that this is the hardest-working generation of undergraduates ever."

It is now thought to be a failure to

get a 2.2 (lower second class). There are literally no thirds left now and it is not because of different standards, it is because this generation is under greater pressure. They are really worried they won't get jobs."

Rises in GCSE and A-level grades have stirred a similar dispute over whether students are performing better or standards are slipping. Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, ordered an investigation of A-level standards last August which has yet to report. But Sir Ron Dearing, in his review of qualifications

earlier this year, said that it was harder to get top A-level grades in mathematics and science than in English and business studies. Sir Ron will look at degree standards as part of his review of higher education.

Professor Chapman's study found that the most common class of degree in all eight subjects in 1973 was a lower second. By 1993, students in accountancy, biology, French, history, physics and politics were most often awarded upper seconds.

He also found that far more firsts and thirds were awarded in civil

engineering, maths, and physics than in French, history or politics. University departments tended to remain consistent in their pattern of grading degrees.

Over the 20-year period, the proportion of students gaining firsts or 2.1s in politics rose from 36 to 60 per cent. Other findings were: accountancy 43 to 52 per cent; biology 44 to 60; civil engineering 35 to 41; French 44 to 57; history 47 to 68; mathematics 33 to 48; physics 36 to 52.

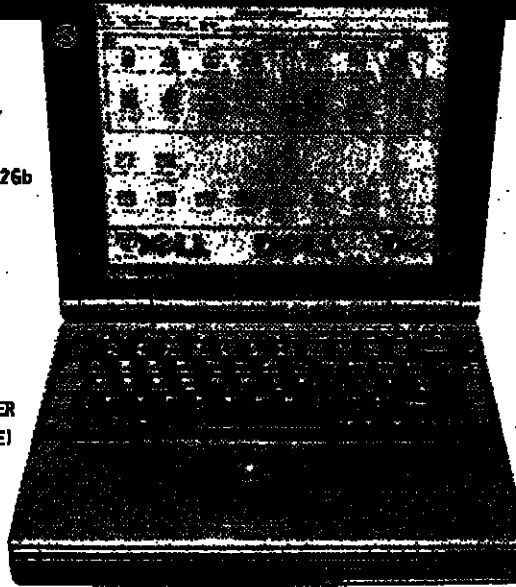
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Army bases step up security as hunt for Osnabrück bombers continues

Police seal roads in effort to cut off terrorists' escape

By ROGER BOYES IN OSNABRÜCK AND MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

GERMAN police have thrown a web of security controls on roads leading to the Netherlands in an effort to catch the IRA team that launched three mortar bombs at the British Army barracks in Osnabrück.

Scotland Yard anti-terrorist detectives have also flown to Osnabrück and 50 military policemen are helping in the manhunt. Security at all British barracks in Germany was under review yesterday after the attack on Friday night.

The frequency of armed patrols around the perimeters of the bases in Germany has been increased, although an army spokesman stressed there was little that could have been done to prevent the attack.

"There was no security breach," he said. "These are public roads and this is just one of those situations which it is very hard to guard against."

Army sources confirmed that there had been no indication of an imminent terrorist threat to barracks in Germany. The last IRA attack in Germany was in June 1990. Brigadier Richard Dannatt, the garrison commander in Osnabrück whose car was damaged in the blast, said: "The investigations are still in their initial phase but the attack bears the hallmarks of the IRA."

As the German police removed the white Ford Transit flat-bed truck, from which the three mortar bombs were launched, for further forensic examination, soldiers at the British barracks finished clearing up the mess caused by the single bomb that exploded. One of the mortar bombs fell harmlessly out of its launcher onto the ground next to the truck. A second reached the fence but failed to explode and the third pene-

trated about 15 yards into the base.

Army sources said that, contrary to some reports, the truck had not been booby-trapped to explode after the mortars were launched. The truck, which has false British number plates, G74 OHD, will provide helpful leads for the German police in trying to trace the IRA suspects who parked the vehicle close to the perimeter fence at Quebec barracks in Osnabrück.

MIS has been warning consistently of the likelihood of further bomb attacks, although intelligence information was not sufficiently precise to indicate what form

they might take. The IRA has always had the capability to change tactics and, during the present round of attacks, it has switched from major shopping areas to low-profile targets.

The list of potential targets found at the home of Edward O'Brien, the IRA bomber who was killed in February when his bomb detonated prematurely on a double-decker bus in the Aldwych in London, included military bases.

Army sources in Germany said the mortar attack on Friday broke a number of windows and damaged some parked cars. Windows at the St Edmund's Roman Catholic church inside the base were

damaged. By yesterday the windows had been boarded up and services were conducted as normal.

The most likely escape route for the IRA terrorists, used by other bombing units in the past, was into The Netherlands, where there are no border controls. German police have been unable to identify the getaway vehicle.

Rolf Hannich, spokesman for the German intelligence unit BKA, said the explosions had taken Germans living in Osnabrück by surprise.

"The British soldiers who live in the barracks knew that bombs were going off in London and Manchester and security was stepped up after the Canary Wharf bomb," he said.

John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, said the IRA's continuing campaign of violence was "utterly pointless and self-defeating".

He urged the IRA to consider the effect the Osnabrück and Manchester attacks had on the willingness of other political parties to sit down with Sinn Féin at peace talks.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, said Britain would be seeking international support for new measures to fight terrorism, including creating "centres of excellence" to share best practice.

Speaking on BBC's *Breakfast with Frost* programme, Mr Howard said that at a meeting of G7 ministers on terrorism in Paris later this month, Britain would be putting forward a series of proposals for making extradition more effective. The Government would also propose excluding from consideration for refugee status those who planned, incited or financed terrorism.

Letters, page 23



Helke Grosser and her two-year-old son Jan at a broken window in their house in Osnabrück after the IRA mortar attack on the British barracks on Friday

Identity cards will not be compulsory

Michael Howard will announce his decision on identity cards next month and is likely to push for a voluntary scheme. The Home Secretary has won Cabinet backing for the credit card-sized documents to be used as passports. His plans will be unveiled as his response to a report by the Home Affairs Select Committee, which is expected to endorse voluntary cards this week. Among witnesses to the committee's inquiry, including civil liberties groups and police, there was little support for compulsion. In the Cabinet, Mr Howard and John Major were previously said to favour a compulsory system but Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, and Michael Forsyth, Scottish Secretary, felt it would be anti-libertarian.

PoW breakthrough hope

Two former prisoners of war travelled to Tokyo yesterday optimistic of a breakthrough in their campaign for compensation for mistreatment during the Second World War. Arthur Titherington, 74, and Keith Martin hope to discuss a settlement with the Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto. They will also attend an important pre-trial hearing at the equivalent of the High Court.

Rail firms 'overcharge'

Privatised rail companies overcharge for tickets and fail to provide the cheapest available fare in up to 87 per cent of cases, according to a survey. The Consumers' Association repeated a survey carried out six months ago which found overpricing at 90 per cent. It shows the companies have ignored warnings that they would be fined if they continued to breach the rules. Station masters, page 11

Coach driver accused

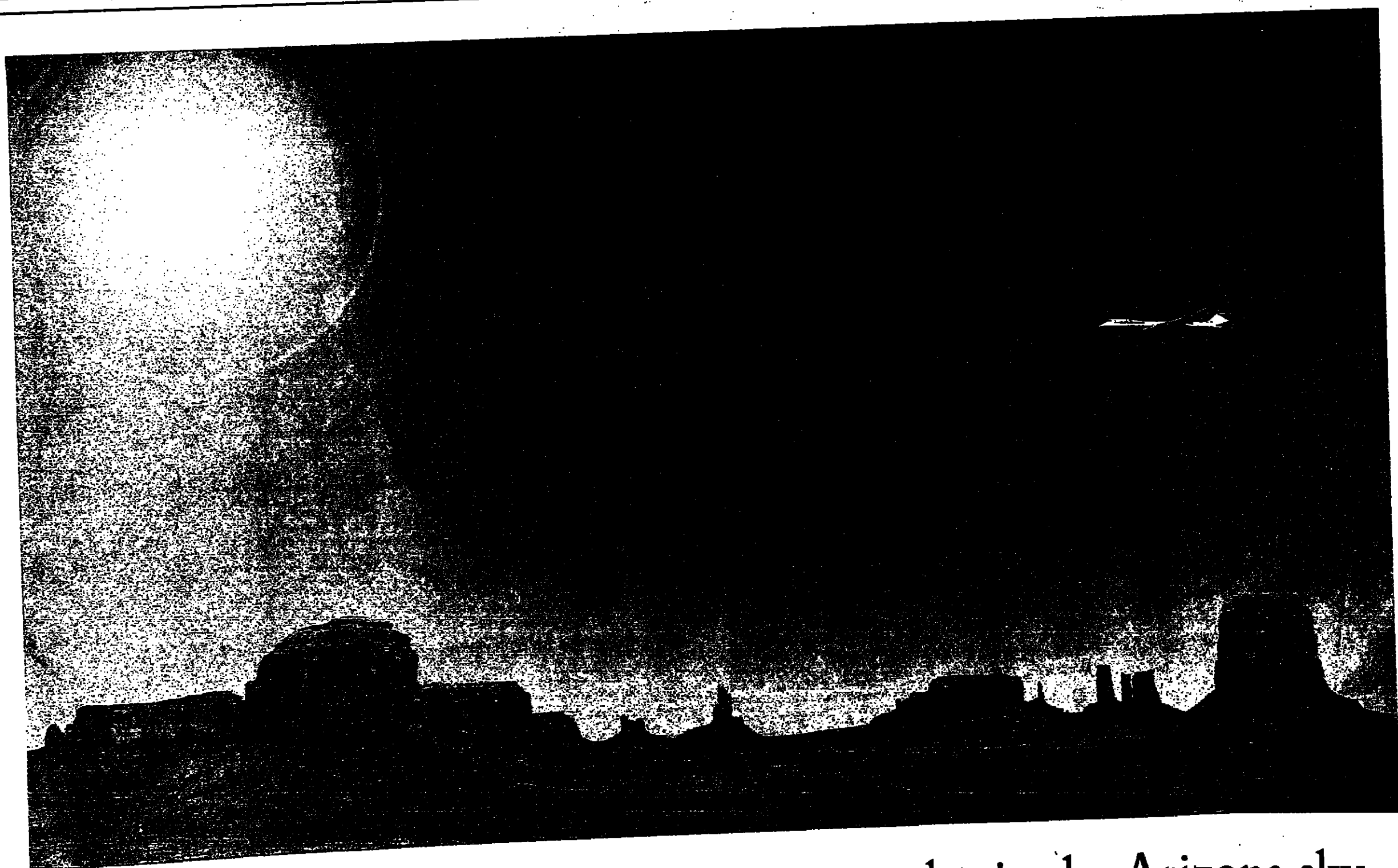
A coach driver is to appear before magistrates at Folkestone today, accused of attempting to smuggle 150kg of cannabis into Britain. Frank Alvey, 42, of Hemlington, Middlesbrough, was charged after a haul worth £500,000 was allegedly found during a spot-check on a vehicle bringing a school group home to Cumbernauld, Lanarkshire, after a week-long European visit.

Art theft ring cracked

British undercover police methods have led to the breaking up of an international art theft ring and the recovery of Old Masters. Fourteen paintings, including works by Canaletto and Tintoretto, have been returned to locations in the former Czechoslovakia after co-operation between police in London, Germany and the Czech Republic. Three people have been arrested.

Barn egg prices cut

Safeway is to cut the price of barn eggs, selling them for no more than those produced by battery hens, in an effort to improve poultry welfare standards. Barn eggs account for only about 5 per cent of Safeway's sales but the chain hopes the proportion will rise to 50 per cent within six months of the new price being introduced on July 22. The eggs will carry an endorsement from the RSPCA.



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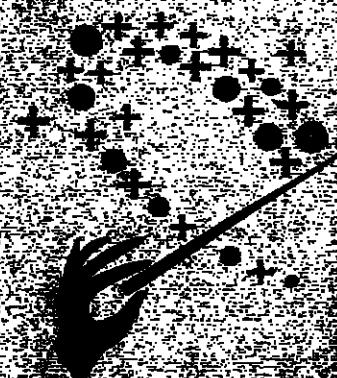
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Ireland takes over EU presidency with full agenda

Bruton seeks to persuade Britain back into the fold

FROM CHARLES BREMNER
IN DUBLIN

IRELAND, one of the most Europhile nations in the European Union, opens its turn in the presidency today with ambitions to tackle unemployment and drugs and hopes of softening Britain's resistance to deeper integration.

Jacques Santer, the President of the European Commission, and his 19 commissioners gather with the Government of John Bruton in Dublin Castle this morning to launch a six-month stint that includes two summits and a tough December deadline for a first draft of the revamped Maastricht treaty.

As a small and enthusiastic member as well as a big beneficiary of EU largesse, Ireland is deemed on the Continent to be well-suited to the task of breathing life into EU business after a stumbling Italian presidency that was distracted by domestic elections and the crisis over British beef. Mr Bruton, whose country is enjoying a remarkable economic boom, says he is intensely aware of the need to convince Europeans that the Union is on their side.

"The European public needs to see what Europe is doing in more personal terms," he says. His top priorities are "a secure Europe, safe streets, some money in pockets and purses... and jobs." As a model pupil of EU economics, highly likely to be in the vanguard of monetary union, Ireland is also eager to advance the preparations for launching EMU on schedule in January 1999.

Fighting the drugs traffic is a special goal. Mr Bruton wants to harmonise laws, high penalties, a clampdown on drugs entering the EU and increased spending on anti-drug campaigns and the treatment of addicts.

Ireland's own troubles on this front were starkly illustrated by the murder last week of Veronica Guerin, a Dublin reporter who was investigating the activities of local underworld barons.

A pledge to take action on unemployment is a permanent chorus from the Commission and a regular, and unfulfilled feature of new presidencies. EU leaders have just slapped down Mr Santer's own plan for generating jobs



Dick Spring, the Irish Foreign Minister, expressed relief that the beef crisis had been resolved.

Spring rules out changes over beef

BY AUDREY MAGEE
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Irish Government has ruled out any renegotiation of the package of measures to end the European Union's ban on British beef exports, during its EU presidency.

Dick Spring, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, said the five-stage plan to lift the ban on British beef, imposed after fears over the possible risk to humans from BSE, would remain, regardless of pressures on the British Government from Euro-sceptics or farmers.

Mr Spring said: "If people try to unravel that package—given the hostility in Europe and the difficulties there were putting this package together—you would open the crisis again." There were "dangers" in implementing the BSE eradication measures, as the programme included a larger cull of cattle than Britain had envisaged. The Irish presidency intends keeping the plan on course so that the ban is gradually lifted.

In an interview, Mr Spring said he was relieved that the BSE crisis had been resolved. It has cleared the way for Ireland to preside over some of the most difficult decisions the EU has to take as it prepares for further integration and to admit new member states.

But Mr Spring remains concerned at the possible impact of the Tory Eurosceptics on British policy. "There is a nagging doubt in the back of our minds about the attitude of the British Government to Europe. My personal view is that John Major is pro-Europe and would want to have a strong Britain in Europe. But there is division in the Conservative Party and that is a matter for the British Government. I hope that division will not make things more difficult."

□ A counselling service is to be set up to help farmers cope with their worries over the impact on their livelihood of the crisis over BSE, it was announced yesterday, on the eve of the Royal Show, the annual showcase for British agriculture. The service will be based at the National Agricultural Centre, at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire, where the show is held.

The threat to the industry has cast a shadow over this year's event, to be opened today by Franz Fischler, the European Agriculture Commissioner, whom many farmers blame for their troubles. He will share the rostrum with Douglas Hogg, the embattled Agriculture Minister. Beef farmers have suffered badly from falling cattle prices. Dairy farmers are deeply anxious about the cull due to start in the autumn.

through EU-financed public works but he is expected to relaunch the scheme in Dublin today.

The Irish are heading for a collision with Britain, Germany and other states after demanding that an "unemployment chapter" be written into the revised Maastricht treaty. This scheme, also strongly favoured by the Nordic states, would create an EU employment committee, with the Commission monitoring the employment policies of member states.

The plan is one of an array of battlegrounds in John Major's likely offensive next autumn to press Britain's anti-integration stance in the inter-governmental conference, the

treaty negotiation which Ireland now chairs. As well as fearing an eruption in the beef war next autumn, Dublin is expecting a showdown over the outline treaty which it must present in December.

Mr Bruton says he believes that Ireland's shared background with Britain equips it "to go some way to bridging the gap" between London and the Continent. He regards Mr Major's refusal to contemplate any dilution of the veto in favour of more qualified majority voting as a negotiating position. Some of his team are less sanguine.

William Rees-Mogg, page 22
Leading article
and Letters, page 23

Controversy over single currency mars Italian self-congratulation

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME

ITALY handed the EU baton to Ireland yesterday after a six-month presidency salvaged by Italian diplomatic skills despite the disruption of an election campaign. But the handover left Italians fearful that they would not be among the "big league" EU nations qualifying for the single currency.

Mario Monti, the Italian EU Commissioner for the Internal Market, infuriated Professor Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister, at the week-

end by predicting that the lira could not merge with the proposed single currency by the 1999 target date. He said it would have to take its place in the queue of "second division" currencies waiting to join.

Signor Prodi's plans to reduce inflation and the budget deficit may be seen as too modest by monetary officials examining single currency credentials, and as too severe by the leftwingers on whose support he depends in parliament.

Italy gave up the EU chair with some relief as the nation headed for the beaches to

forget temporarily European and economic worries. The press hailed Signor Prodi's performance at the EU summit in Florence a week ago and the G7 summit in Lyons as mastery. "Our small but shrewd Prime Minister has won international respect," L'Espresso said.

"Italy does not count for nothing," Signor Prodi declared proudly as he returned to Rome from Lyons. "Our economic weight is equal to Britain's and almost equal to that of France, which gives us a certain role and responsibility."

Garda in crisis over crime barons who live beyond reach of the law

BY NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

IRISH police are facing one of their gravest crises since the founding of the state 75 years ago, as they grapple with the rising drugs trade and the investigation into the murder of the investigative journalist Veronica Guerin.

Known criminals, including the alleged drugs dealer suspected of ordering the murder of Ms Guerin last week, are able to live openly lavish lifestyles beyond the reach of the law.

Amid deep public concern at the perceived failure of the police to cope with the crime wave, a senior political source in Dublin admitted that the Garda Síochána was "going through one of the worst periods in its history—a series of incidents is chipping away at the public perception of the Garda. There has been a lot of good work in seizing drugs

and IRA weaponry, but there has also been a lot of bad." Ministers will attempt to seize the initiative on policing shortly when they announce a new Garda Commissioner to succeed Patrick Culligan, who retires this month.

It is understood that Nora Owen, the Justice Minister, will recommend that the Cabinet appoints Pat Byrne, 50. One of two deputy commissioners and the force's head of operations, he is highly rated by senior ministers and respected for his operational experience.

Opposition politicians say it is wrong to focus criticism solely on the police. They point out that the Government's failure to announce a new Garda Commissioner weeks before Mr Culligan's retirement underlines the inability of ministers to deal with the



Veronica Guerin: named a well-known criminal

law-and-order crisis. The opposition describes as "too little, too late" a series of measures announced last week by John Bruton, the Prime Minister, which include a referendum to tighten the bail laws and plans to restrict the right of silence for suspected drugs dealers.

Tony Gregory, an independent MP in Dublin Central, yesterday launched a scathing attack on successive governments and the police. He said: "The drug problem has been permitted to fester out of control. If there has been any official policy, it has been one of containment."

Mr Gregory dismissed claims made by the Govern-

ment last year that it would wage a fight against the "drugs scourge". He said that a promised "drugs supremo" to combat the illegal trade never materialised and that financial measures against drugs barons have failed because they depend on charges and convictions against the criminals.

A member of the public provided the most stinging criticism of successive Governments. Amid hundreds of bouquets of flowers left outside the Irish Parliament in memory of Ms Guerin, one note read simply: "Died because of government inaction."

The deep anguish felt throughout Ireland at the shooting of Ms Guerin on Wednesday was heightened over the weekend with the publication of a statement she made to police after she was allegedly assaulted last September by a well-known Dublin criminal whom she tried to interview. Ms Guerin said that the man, who is facing charges in connection with the alleged assault, had threatened to kill her family.

She said: "I am fearful for my life and for the safety of my family. I believe that the threats made to me were meant to put me in fear in relation to my personal safety and that of the members of my family."

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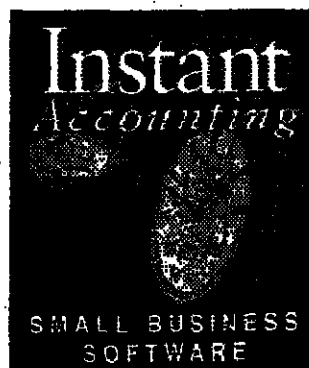
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Safety fears prompt triumphant return of the station master

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE old-fashioned station master, a much-respected figure in the golden age of train travel, is set to make a nostalgic return to Britain's regularly vandalised and often understaffed ticket offices and waiting rooms.

A rail company is planning to restore masters to at least 20 of its stations on commuter routes into London as part of its campaign to win back public confidence in security.

Station masters, often resplendent with hats, watch chains and fresh buttonholes, were familiar figures on the railways until the late 1960s, when financial pressures on British Rail forced huge job cuts.

The popular image was reinforced in the 1970 children's film classic, *The Railway Children*, when Bernard Cribbens played a friendly, paternalistic station master at a village halt.

In reality, the 1970s and 1980s saw the masters being replaced by "team leaders" and "business managers" who were rarely seen by passengers and were responsible for a group of stations rather than just one.

The move to revive the

A walk-in doctor's surgery will open next month for the 200,000 commuters who daily pass through Victoria railway station in central London (Dominic Kennedy writes). A team of healthcare entrepreneurs hopes to put a private medical centre in every large train terminus, airport and shopping precinct in the next three years. The "medicentre" at Victoria will charge £30 for a 15-minute consultation, £50 for a smear test and £15 for an ECG. Its backer, Sinclair Monrose Health Group, believes the scheme will still save money for those who would otherwise have to take a half-day off work to see their family doctor.

reassuring figure of the station master comes as fears about personal safety at empty and vulnerable stations are believed to deter many potential passengers from making more use of the railways.

Peter Wilkinson, commercial director of West Anglia Great Northern Railway, the

company behind the idea, said there was huge public demand for a return to a highly visible staff presence.

"Passengers want someone who knows the route and knows the connections, who takes responsibility for people who are joining the train and who takes account of the welfare of the passengers on that railway," he said.

The station master would be "someone who doesn't walk past a piece of litter, who doesn't believe it is someone else's job to look after the platform and who doesn't hide in the cabin at the back all day. We need to relearn some of our old tricks."

The company operates commuter trains between the King's Cross, Moorgate and Liverpool Street stations and destinations in Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Essex. It is due to be privatised by early next year.

The stations where masters are most likely to appear include Stevenage, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Bishop's Stortford, Welwyn Garden City and Walthamstow. However, any station, however small, that had high levels of peak-hour passenger traffic



A head for steam: a station master, H.C.R. Calver, at Liverpool Street in 1931. His uniform included a silk hat

and problems with vandalism is expected to be considered for appointments.

The masters, who will be full-time employees, will be recruited from existing staff or, in some cases, from the local community, and will start to take up their positions

from the end of the year, Mr Wilkinson said. The job title may have to be adapted, however, to reflect the greater representation of women in the industry in the 1990s, he added.

They will be responsible for the appearance and facilities

at the station and expected to be out on the platform and available to deal with passengers' complaints and inquiries, particularly at peak travelling times.

Rail commentators welcomed the move as a return to old values. Roger Ford, the

editor of *Rail Privatisation News*, said: "There needs to be someone of authority and presence out on the platform."

"There is nothing passengers love more than pouring abuse on relatively junior staff because there is no one around of authority to take the flack."

Maturity fails to soften rock of the aged

By DAVID SINCLAIR

OASIS and Blur might rule the charts, but when it comes to staging rock extravaganzas, the old brigade can still cut the mustard. That was the resounding verdict of the 150,000 fans who braved less than temperate weather conditions on Saturday to relive their youth in the company of Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan and reunited members of The Who at the Mastercard Masters of Music Concert in Hyde Park.

Performing before the biggest gathering of people there since the wedding celebrations for the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1981, Dylan, 55, and Clapton, 51, played a generous selection of their greatest hits to raise money for The Prince's Trust.

The centrepiece of the event was the lavishly staged presentation, in the presence of the Prince of Wales, of The Who's 1973 album, *Quadrophenia*. Pete Townshend, 51, Roger Daltrey, 52, bassist John Entwistle, 51, and a cast of dozens suffered no lack of energy as they stomped through the "rock opera" which tells the story of a bawling, pill-popping, 1960s mod called Jimmy.

Among those in cameo roles were Stephen Fry, the newsreader Trevor McDonald and Gary Glitter, who hurtled his microphone stand around just as he had during rehearsals, when he accidentally gave Daltrey a black eye. Daltrey, sporting a magnificent eye-patch, showed no signs that age or injury were slowing him down, despite the fact that a bone under his eye was broken.

The crowd was unusually attentive and well-behaved and any scenes of debauchery were strictly confined to the show itself. In the hospitality tent, celebrities ate crêpes and chocolate cake, sipped champagne, and generally behaved with a decorum that would have been unheard of in their youth.

Wimbledon, pages 34-35

Review, page 20

Rest - and determination - helped Henman to play the game

A POPULAR theme in Victorian and Edwardian school stories was of the small, slight boy who overcame some ghastly disease to become hero of a school team, later to lead armies or govern colonies.

When Tim Henman walks on to the Centre Court at Wimbledon today for the fourth round of the tournament, he could well be fulfilling the childhood fantasies of the generations brought up with the call "Play up, play up and play the game".

Henman had an inborn ability to be a good athlete and from his earliest days at school

was well co-ordinated and showed an uncanny eye for a ball. The genetic background for his athleticism was proven: on his mother's side he, and his brothers, are the fourth generation to triumph on the tennis court and his father was an outstanding all-round athlete who achieved county standard in several sports.

Very slight as a young boy, Henman faced his first major health problem soon after he joined David Lloyd's squad at Reed's School, where intensive tennis training is given to likely champions. Just when he was showing his worth on



Dr Thomas Stuttford

the court, he developed osteochondritis.

The osteochondroses are a group of orthopaedic diseases that involve the bones and joints of adolescents and, sometimes, younger children. They are an important and

serious cause of the 19th-century diagnosis of growing pains. The different forms of osteochondritis juvenilis, which affect the growing points, the epiphyses, of the children's bones, are labelled according to the joints con-

cerned. The common joints to become deranged are the hip (Perthe's disease), the knee (Osgood-Schlatter's disease) and the spine (Scheuermann's disease). Osteochondritis juvenilis may also be responsible, but less often, for problems with the small joints, the ribs and elbow.

Whichever joint is involved, it becomes tender and painful, movement is restricted and, if the end of the bone is not rested, becomes softened and distorted, problems that can lead to osteoarthritis in later life. The treatment is prolonged rest and immobilisation.

Its cause is unknown but in some instances excessive exercise of an immature joint has been held responsible. There may be a genetic tendency to develop osteochondritis and, in many types, males are more often affected than females.

Another form of osteochondritis, osteochondritis dissecans, the condition is rather different as the bone under the joint surface breaks up and small fragments of bone become loose and may need removing surgically.

As in the best yarns, when Tim Henman developed osteo-

chondritis, he rejected the advice and entreaties of his elders to give up tennis and instead, after months of rest, returned to the game with greater determination than ever. This single-mindedness and determination is still obvious and should help to make him a champion.

He has concentrated equally on building up his slight frame through body-building exercises so that now he can combine inherited skill with the power needed to hit the ball as hard as his opponent.

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West fears ploy as Karadzic steps down

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT, AND MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

WESTERN governments welcomed an announcement yesterday that Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, had stepped down as President. But there were fears that it was merely a ploy to escape the threat of new trade sanctions.

Dr Karadzic had been given an ultimatum by the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations to resign all political functions by today or face tough new sanctions. Yesterday the leader, who has been indicted as a war criminal, obliged by handing over his powers to Mrs Plavsic, a deputy known for her hardline views.

However, the West greeted the announcement with scepticism. Dr Karadzic announced in April that he was transferring his powers to Mrs Plavsic, but it soon became clear that he had not done so.

Carl Bildt, the major powers' High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina in charge of the civilian reconstruction of the country, said: "His replacement today is an important step towards the cleansing of Republika Srpska from the association with the crimes for which Dr Karadzic and others have been indicted by the international tribunal, but it is by no means the

final step." The Foreign Office in London said Britain would give 100 per cent support to Mr Bildt to ensure that Dr Karadzic stayed out of politics in Bosnia, although it was expected that, even if he had really stepped down this time, his "malign influence" would remain behind the scenes.

Mrs Plavsic said that Dr Karadzic would remain President of the Republika Srpska until the September 14 elections, prompting a warning from the Foreign Office that this would be "unacceptable".

A special statement from the G7

leaders said that Dr Karadzic should transfer all his political powers permanently and that the Bosnian Serb republic should co-operate fully in implementing the Dayton peace accords. It warned all the leaders of Bosnia that, unless they carried out their Dayton commitments, they could expect no help from the outside world.

Mrs Plavsic, who said that she had taken over as "interim" President, is a noted hardliner with an intimidating nickname: Iron Lady of the Bosnian Serbs. She is known for her virulent outbursts, strong nationalism and total support for Dr Karadzic.

Michael Steiner, Mr Bildt's deputy, said in Mostar: "We are not satisfied with a charade. What we want is for Dr Karadzic to step down from every public function, and only then are we satisfied."

Citizens were voting in the divided city of Mostar yesterday in Bosnia's first free elections since the end of the war there. The European Union-sponsored voting for a single city council in the former urban battleground, now partitioned between Muslims and Croats, was seen as a trial run for the country-wide elections in September.



Plavsic: known as hardliner



Radovan Karadzic, indicted for war crimes, has "quit" before

Major to outlaw foreign advocates of terror attacks

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN LYONS

JOHN MAJOR called at the weekend for a change in international law to prevent activists such as Muhammad al-Masari using a foreign sanctuary to advocate terrorism overseas.

The Prime Minister, praising the commitment of the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations, together with Russia, to make life "intolerable" for terrorists by giving them no place to hide, also insisted that the world should look again at a 1951 United Nations Convention. He said that this should not give protection for anyone either engaged in terrorism or advocating it.

"We want much better co-ordination. We don't want terrorists shifting from one country to another or using one capital because it is much easier to operate from there. There has never been such unanimity of view among the heads of government to take collective action against this," Mr Major said at the end of the Lyons G7 summit.

Britain has been criticised by several allies, especially

taken immediately, and how co-operation against organised crime, including drug trafficking and money laundering, can be strengthened. Interpol, which has its headquarters in Lyons, was briefed on these commitments.

The final communiqué also promised a tough programme to fight illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. After their nuclear summit in Moscow in April, the leaders said they would strengthen measures to control and account for nuclear material, work out ways of disposing properly of fissile material, no longer needed for bombs, and placed sensitive nuclear material, such as separated plutonium and highly enriched uranium, under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Authority. G7 nuclear experts will meet in Paris in October to decide further action.

There was clear disappointment in Lyons that the talks on a comprehensive test ban treaty failed to keep the summit deadline, after India's refusal to sign the draft agreement. The leaders said they were still



Masari: critical of Saudi Royal Family

France, in the past year because of its asylum laws, which do not specifically forbid asylum seekers advocating violence and terrorism at home as long as they do not break British law. The Government has been embarrassed by the calls of Saudi exiles in particular for the overthrow of the Saudi Royal Family, and the Foreign Office wants to see the law changed so that, as in France and several other countries, asylum seekers are forbidden from engaging in political activity.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, is travelling to Saudi Arabia today to reassure King Fahd that the G7 is determined to hunt down and punish terrorists, and will prevent the advocacy of terrorism from any hiding place. He will be followed on Friday by President Chirac of France, who will also convey international support for the Saudis after the Dhahran bombing.

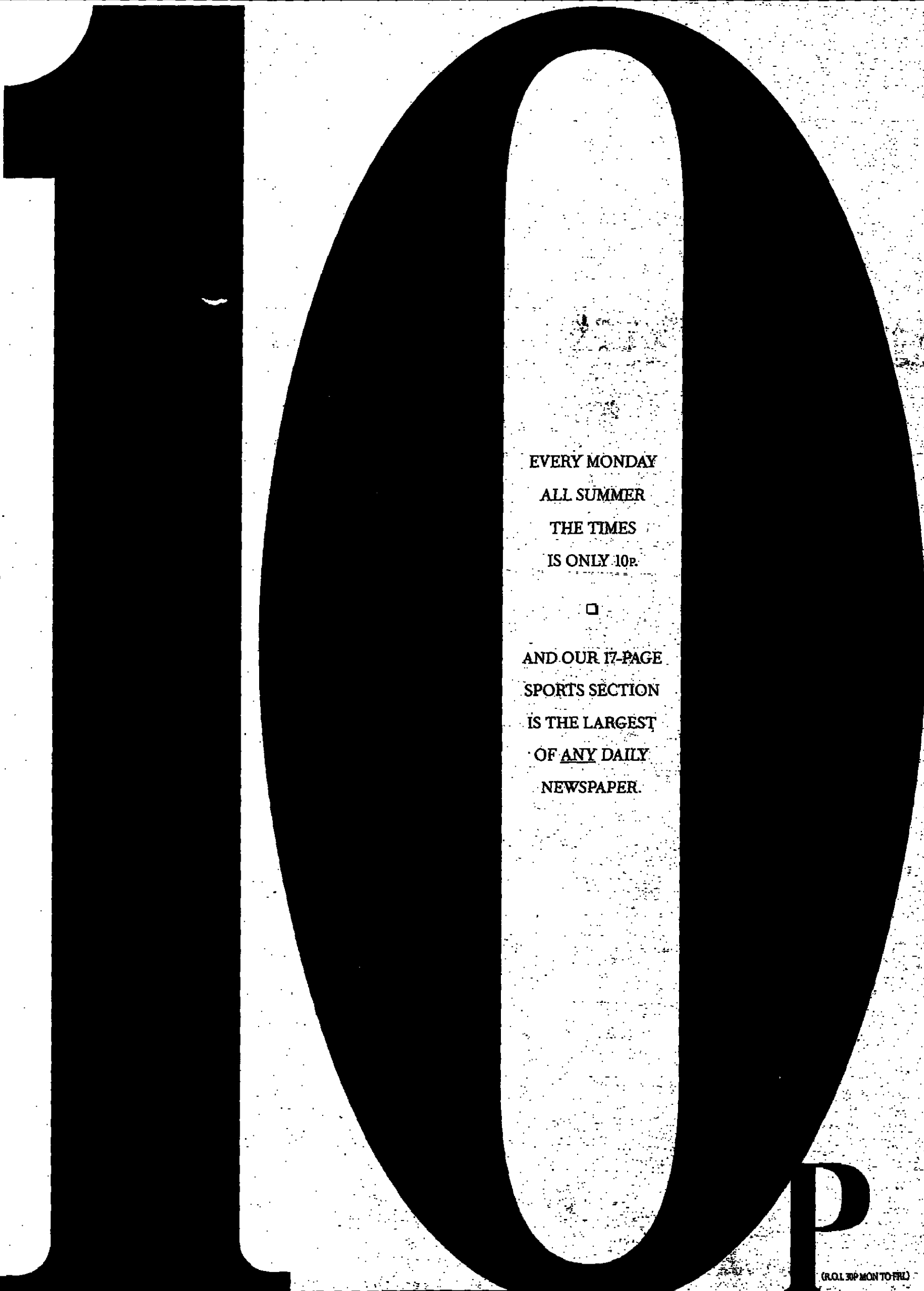
The summit, which was dominated by the fight against terrorism, endorsed a 40-point plan to combat international crime. Main points were the long-term need to harmonise varying judicial systems and to simplify and speed up extradition procedures. Interior and foreign ministers will meet in Paris this month to look at what steps can be

determined to present a treaty to the United Nations General Assembly in September. Meanwhile, pending its entry into force, they called on all nuclear weapon states to exercise the "utmost restraint". The communiqué also reiterated the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the need to implement, with proper verification, the convention on biological weapons, and the urgency of sparing no effort to rid the world of the "scourge" of anti-personnel mines, booby traps and other devices.

The final afternoon of discussions on Saturday was devoted to reform of the UN and international financial bodies. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, briefed the summit on his efforts to cut costs. But virtually no progress was made on the awkward subject of who should succeed him, and Mr Major insisted that the subject — which set most G7 leaders against the Americans — was not broached in plenary sessions or in his meeting with President Clinton.

While the UN was the "cornerstone" of the international system, it needed to be revitalised, strengthened and reformed, the leaders agreed. The scale of national contributions should be made more equitable.

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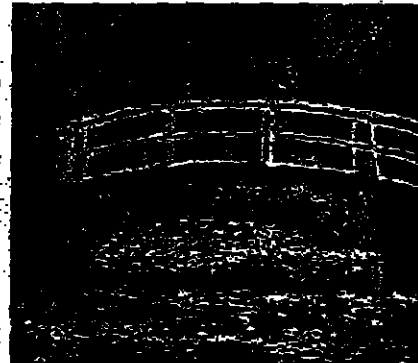
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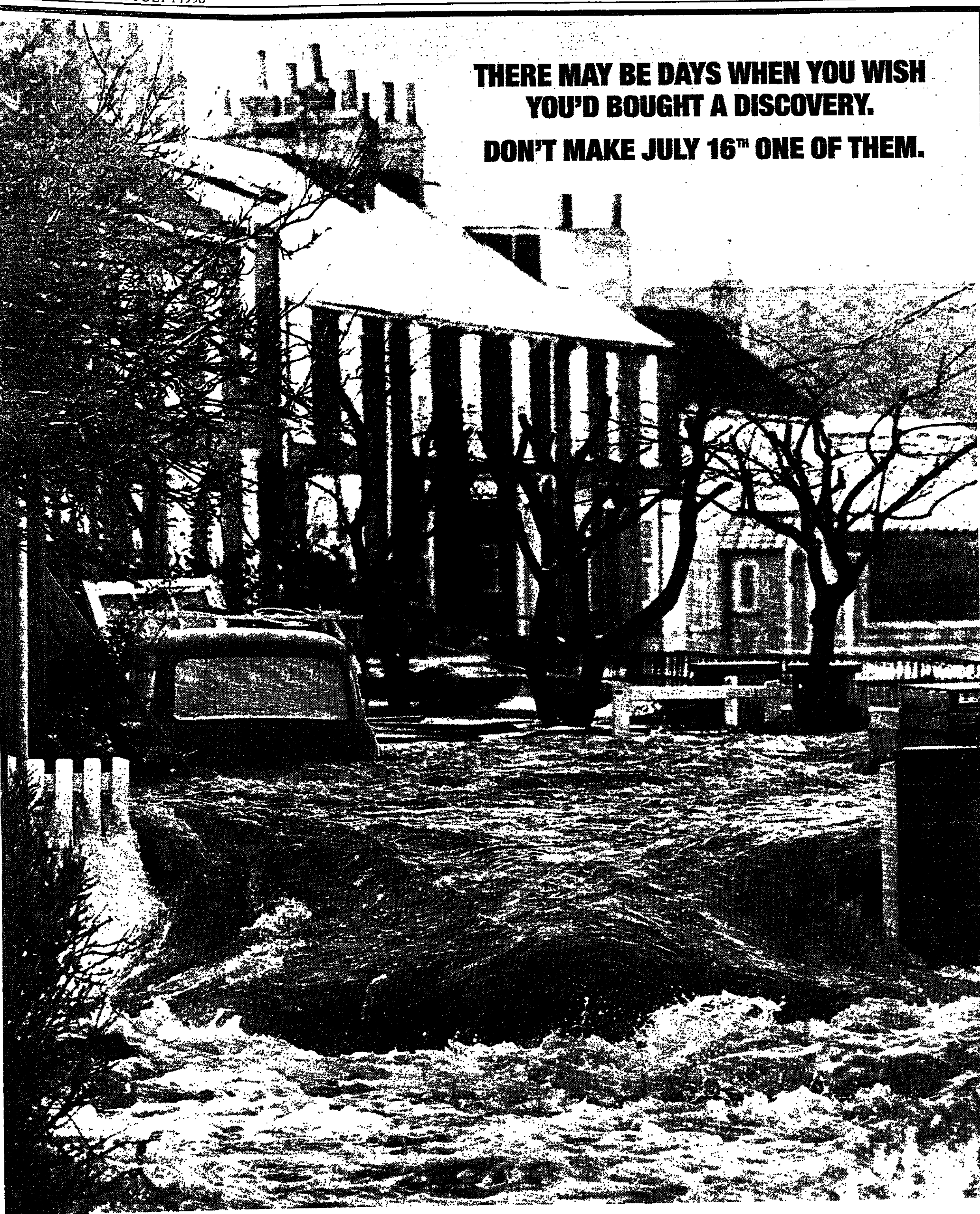
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DISCOVERY

Opt-out offers tempting antidote to queasy ride on euro roller-coaster

Hopping between several European Union capitals over the past few weeks, I was struck by a paradox. From the bond markets to the Euro-sceptic bunkers, the message is the same: a single currency will happen, but almost no one expects to enjoy it.

The prospect awakens a kind of resigned, queasy apprehension. Phrases such as "There's no alternative" and "It's going to happen anyway" recur in the conversation of bankers and bureaucrats from Düsseldorf to Dublin. "Look," said an ex-



perated Labour parliamentary candidate who was trying to persuade me that it would be Tony Blair's duty to take Britain into the single currency.

cy, "of course we wouldn't have started from here if we'd had any choice. But choice is exactly what we don't have."

The scale of the risks involved in starting the single currency in 1999 dampens spirits, and by no means just in Britain. People feel as if they're sitting on a roller-coaster which is just crawling up to the highest point of the ride. Nobody quite knows what they're going to hurtle towards and they aren't as thrilled as they thought they might be. Only one man admits no doubts or dizziness — Helmut Kohl. The German

Chancellor has never lost sight of his aim to clamp shut a monetary union before he retires. Twice recently he has repeated that the continent's choice in the next century lies between unity and war.

British officials who like to quote Herr Kohl's more cautious formulas as evidence that his enthusiasm for a federal Europe is waning, should cut out and keep the words of his greeting to the Pope at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin last week. "The duty of a Christian" is indissolubly

linked to the duty of the citizen. This applies particularly to the building of a united Europe.

But supposing a politician decides that his supreme moral duty is to help the 18 million EU citizens without a job? The G7 leaders didn't devote many words to the issue in Lyons at the weekend, but that's because they've already depleted their stock of clichés at previous summits. A politician who believed that a single currency could lock his country into permanently high unemployment rates and risk serious

social unrest might think his civic duty lay in keeping his country off the roller-coaster.

Stand for a second in the smart shoes of President Chirac, the host in Lyons. En route to being elected a year ago, he made promises about the numbers of jobs France would create before 2000 that he has not the faintest hope of keeping. His Government announced a 30,000 rise in unemployment as the G7 discussions began. But M Chirac has also decided that to back away from the single currency

would do untold damage to the franc and his alliance with Germany.

A few people in France seem to be having second thoughts. A recent article in *Le Monde*, a paper which rarely gives Britain the benefit of the doubt, described the past few years' performance of the British economy as "faultless" and well on the way to "confirming how different it is from the continent". Particularly, said the economist author, when British unemployment has fallen to 7.7 per cent. He did not even need to remind readers

that French unemployment is predicted to be at 12.5 per cent at the year's end.

Britain does have a choice, the writer concluded. Outside the single currency, Britain might well survive or even prosper. Sterling might even become a currency to which people fled from the euro.

Nobody much envies John Major over here. But in Paris, one or two people think he may be on to something.

GEORGE BROCK

William Rees-Mogg, page 22
Letters, page 23

Lebed stakes claim to vice-presidency while Yeltsin ails

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S leader in waiting, General Aleksandr Lebed, yesterday took advantage of President Yeltsin's apparent ill health to put himself forward for a powerful new job as vice-president.

In the clearest signal yet that the new National Security Adviser is laying the groundwork for his accession to the Kremlin leadership, General Lebed said Russia needed to recreate the vice-presidency. The post was abolished three years ago by President Yeltsin after Aleksandr Rutskoi, who then held the job, led an uprising that culminated in the bloody events of October 1993.

Nevertheless, General Lebed, who has held his present position for less than two weeks, told the BBC: "We need this post and a person who would assume constitutional powers and take political and even military decisions."

The former paratrooper's latest muscle-flexing further unsettled the tense political atmosphere in Russia, where President Yeltsin has virtually disappeared from public view with only 48 hours to go before polls open on Wednesday for the crucial run-off presidential vote. The Russian leader has not been seen in public since a reception at the Kremlin on Wednesday and has cancelled

a series of engagements, most recently a pop concert in his honour in Moscow yesterday hosted by the country's top-selling newspaper.

But in written replies to questions put by the Interfax news agency, the Kremlin boss attempted yesterday to play down concern about his physical fitness, admitting only that he had "almost" lost his voice after a series of interviews early last week.

In yesterday's remarks, he made a last-ditch appeal to voters to turn out in force and back him on Wednesday when he faces a close run-off against Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader.

"I urge every one of you, dear voters, to put routine matters aside on July 3 and come to vote," said the President, who is believed to have spent the weekend recuperating at his dacha outside Moscow. "On that day, we will vote not for Yeltsin or Zyuganov. We will vote for ourselves, for our families, for the future of our children."

It was clear from his message that Mr Yeltsin fears voter apathy more than he does his Communist rival. According to opinion polls, the Russian leader should score an easy victory over Mr Zyuganov.

While the President can expect to build on his 35 per

cent support in the first round, by picking up most of the voters who backed other candidates, the Communist leader is unlikely to be able to climb significantly above the 32 per cent of the vote that he received.

However, Communist voters tend to be disciplined and reliable while President Yeltsin's electorate is more vulnerable to apathy and indecision, particularly if there are doubts about his physical state.

Pollsters predict that if the turnout remains above 60 per cent President Yeltsin should win easily, but that if it falls below that threshold Mr Zyuganov could pull off a stunning surprise.

The stocky, life-long Communist Party apparatchik has put new life into his otherwise lacklustre campaign in the past few days, and at the weekend again tried to capitalise on his rival's ill health.

"If we are talking about laryngitis then there would be no reason to cancel meetings with officials," said Mr Zyuganov, 52. "In my view, it is all a lot more complicated. On the other hand, at 65, after two serious heart attacks, you can't be in good health. Any country doctor will tell you that."



A young fan in Piazza Navona, Rome. Ice-cream sales melt away in Italy when the licking season stops in September

Italy uses sex to whip up ice-cream sales

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

YOU would not know it from watching residents and tourists licking mountainous ice-cream cones this summer, but the Italian ice-cream industry is in crisis.

Italy is full of giant advertising hoardings depicting a choice: disappearing between a pair of cherry-red lips. The use of sexual overtones to sell ice cream, while common elsewhere, is new to Italy and a sign of desperation.

According to Luca Maroni, head of a leading advertising agency, Italian ice-cream consumption is static because Italians, particularly the young, eat ice cream only for a limited seasonal period. They start licking in April and stop

in September. "We have to make ice cream sexy all-year round," Signor Maroni says. "Using sexual imagery is fine. It is less demeaning than advertising which shows a woman cleaning a floor and smiling as she does it."

The fact that Italians are having to be persuaded to eat more ice cream is ironic, given that it was the Italians who introduced the stuff to the rest of Europe. As Elizabeth David, the food writer, notes in her classic work on ice cream, an Italian cook in the Medici entourage took the secret of ice — in those days, largely sorbets — to France in the 16th century.

The root of the problem,

according to Enrico Lehmann, a former advertising executive, is that Italians do not regard ice cream as food. Sales depend on the vagaries of the weather. The businessmen and politicians who happily queue up in smart suits at Giolitti's, the celebrated ice-cream parlour near the Italian parliament in Rome, and juggle a dripping cone with their mobile phones, would not dream of spooning ice cream out of a bowl at home as a dessert.

"The reason can be summed up in one word: pasta," Signor Lehmann said. "In the Italian stomach, pasta provides all the calories. Ice cream does not stand a chance."

As a result Italians are among the lowest per-capita consumers of ice cream in the world, far behind not only America but also Russia and Scandinavia, where ice-cream sales are consistently high despite the cold climate.

Italian traditionalists, however, blame poor quality rather than eating habits for the low sales. Cafés such as Giolitti's still sell home-made ice creams (*gelati artigianali*) in a variety of inventive flavours. But nearly all the 2½ million tonnes of ice cream sold in Italy every year now comes in the form of mass-produced bars and lollies, with four giant companies dominating the market.

Chalker accused by Moi

Nairobi: President Moi accused Baroness Chalker, Britain's Overseas Development Minister, of meddling in Kenyan politics.

Speaking in the west Kenyan town of Eldoret, Mr Moi said Lady Chalker's attitude towards the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) and Kenya was "unacceptable". He claimed that she had tried to intimidate Simon Hemans, the British High Commissioner to Kenya, for voicing positive opinions. Mr Hemans was reported here as predicting KANU would win next year's election. (AFP)

Gunmen kill 16 in Colombia

Bogotá: At least 16 people were killed when about ten masked men opened fire at a bus terminal and a pool hall in Medellín on Saturday. The attack was one of the worst in recent years in the Colombian city, where armed bands control poor areas. Medellín's police chief has admitted not having enough officers to control the situation. (AP)

Election sweep for Museveni

Kampala: Backers of President Museveni of Uganda won 140 of the 180 parliamentary seats, analysts said after more than 90 per cent of poll results were in. The President banned political parties in 1986. Advocates of multiparty politics took four seats in central Kampala and retained northern areas. (Reuters)

Cheap liquor as state goes dry

Faridabad, India: Liquor stores in the hard-drinking north Indian state of Haryana sold their stocks at big discounts on the eve of a deadline banning consumption of alcohol. The new state government had promised housewives to introduce prohibition if it won the May election. (AFP)

Voters gallop to Mongolian poll

Ulan Bator: Mongolians voted, many after riding on horseback for hours across the steppes, in the second general election since communist rule ended. The former communist Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party was expected to retain power. (Reuters)

'Killer' wolf shot

Delhi: Authorities in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh have shot dead a wolf which was believed to have killed at least 18 children over the past two months, the Press Trust of India reported. (Reuters)



Bugs Bunny stars at the theme park opening

Ruhr looks to a rabbit for revival

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

BUGS BUNNY, the Gremlins and Batman are pitted against Mickey Mouse and Goofy in an attempt to revive Germany's rundown Ruhr region. Warner Brothers, the American entertainment group, this weekend opened a huge theme park and studio complex in Bottrop, once the hub of a thriving coalmining industry.

The park, with *Poltergeist* Academy stunts, roller coasters and Bat cave, is a direct challenge to Disneyland Paris and is supposed to draw some of the 27 million people who inhabit the former industrial heartland of Germany. But it is also part of a vast restructuring programme that has set up scuba diving facilities in flooded coal bunkers, converted old slagheaps into a 60-mile hiking route and made museums out of gasometers.

Centro, which will be Europe's largest shopping centre, is due to open in September on the site of an old steel plant. It will include 230 shops, an 11,000-seat arena, two hotels, an artificial lake, 30 restaurants and a 1,500-seat fast-food area. Bruce Willis and Sylvester Stallone, the film stars, are to open a Planet Hollywood restaurant in the centre.

Ciller denounced for helping to put Islamist in power

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

NECMETTIN ERBAKAN'S success in becoming the first Islamist Prime Minister of Turkey has focused attention on the woman who propelled him to power.

Tansu Ciller, leader of True Path and a former Prime Minister, must now rally her party into the "Yes" lobby for a vote of confidence scheduled for next Monday after her decision to enter into a coalition with Mr Erbakan's Welfare Party. In exchange for her party's backing, Mr Erbakan is said to be prepared to drop his support for a parliamentary inquiry into alleged corruption against Mrs Ciller when she was Prime Minister.

The Turkish press has denounced Mrs Ciller for reneging on her promise to never

enter into a coalition with a party "that would bury the country in darkness". She had also accused Mr Erbakan of being a "hypocrite".

The *Sanbah* newspaper which campaigned for her in the elections in December said: "If Ciller now won't lose sleep over fears of being indicted before the supreme court, she should be kept awake by her own shame."

But a much-heralded rebellion within Mrs Ciller's party has not materialised and only a handful of MPs now say they will not back her in a vote of confidence. Their numbers must swell to 20 if they are going to scuttle the coalition. This is unlikely, given that the alternative to supporting the coalition would almost cer-

tainly be a new election, in which the Welfare Party could be expected to improve on the 21 per cent of the vote it received last time.

In the new Government, Mrs Ciller will be Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. The woman who previously presented herself as the leader who could stop Welfare is now acting as the guarantor who can stop Mr Erbakan turning Turkey into an Islamic state.

□ **Tunisia:** A woman suicide bomber blew herself up in the eastern Turkish town yesterday, killing at least five soldiers and wounding 25 people during a military parade. Security officials said the attack was the work of Kurdish guerrillas. (Reuters)

Polanski film ends in tears before it begins

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE latest film project by Roman Polanski, the controversy-prone director, may be remembered as one of the greatest disaster movies, without ever reaching the screen.

Last month John Travolta, the leading actor, stormed out of *The Double* and flew back to America just as filming in Paris was about to start. He was followed last week by his co-star, Isabelle Adjani, and yesterday it was reported that the entire project, which Polanski had been working on for two years, has been abandoned.

The row over the making of *The Double*, based on Dostoevsky's novel, came to a head when Travolta claimed that Polanski had altered the script without consulting him

and particularly, objected to the addition of a nude scene.

"I was promised a Rolex. What I was offered was a Timex," complained the actor, whom the producers have threatened to sue over breach of his £11 million contract.

Polanski persuaded Steve Martin to step in for a reported fee of up to £8 million but Adjani said that according to her contract she should have been consulted on the change of cast, and also left the set.

Peter Guber, the producer, has reportedly invested some £40 million in the aborted project and while the film version of *The Double* may never see the light of day, the drama is certain to continue — in an American court.



White House aide leaps to denounce Clinton 'tryst' book

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S senior adviser yesterday tore into Gary Aldrich, the former FBI agent who has written a salacious "tell-all" book about the White House, accusing him of being a tool of Republican operatives.

George Stephanopoulos alleged that Mr Aldrich was supported by a group which was determined to destroy the presidency, and at least one of them was an adviser to Bob Dole, the Republican presidential challenger, who should immediately disavow them and Mr Aldrich's book.

Among the Aldrich allegations making headlines in America is his accusation that the President frequently slipped out of the White House without his Secret Service bodyguards to keep midnight trysts in the nearby Marriott hotel with a woman who may be a celebrity.

With the Secret Service repudiating the story, Mr Stephanopoulos said anyone making such an accusation that could be so easily checked as untrue was not worth believing at all. He was appearing on *This Week with David Brinkley*, having failed to persuade ABC television to keep Mr Aldrich off the show.

Mr Aldrich held his ground under relentless claims that his account of Mr Clinton being uncontactable for hours

on end was implausible. He also promised to name a senior White House official with a history of extensive drug use if called to testify under oath at congressional hearings.

Earlier, at the end of the G7 summit in Lyons, Mr Clinton had given a tepid response when asked about the book and his purported late-night trips. Dismissing the book, he said: "As to that other thing, I mean, I hardly even know how to comment on that. I mean, I hardly know what to say. I feel bad for the FBI."

Asked why Mr Clinton had not categorically denied the book's allegations, Mike McCurry, the White House spokesman, said: "He's at a loss for words because he can't believe anyone is taking it seriously." However, Mr Clinton did deny the book's assertion that his wife had appointed Craig Livingstone to be White House head of personnel security.

Mr Livingstone, a former bouncer, resigned under fire last week after hundreds of FBI background files were found to have been improperly gathered by the White House. Mr Stephanopoulos said he had been hired by the late Vincent Foster, the White House deputy counsel whose death from a gunshot wound was recorded as a suicide.

In damning the book and in pleading with the American media to ignore it, the White House is overlooking the fact that its central premise — that there was a systematic breakdown of security and background checks in the White House — has been corroborated by congressional hearings into the burgeoning scandal known as Filegate. Glee! Republicans yesterday said the high-powered campaign to denigrate the book was evidence that the Clintons were terrified of its claims.

To be sure, Mr Aldrich seems unduly picky about the casual dress and habits of the young Clinton staff, but his assertions that they were too easy-going, inefficient and contemptuous of traditional authority have been witnessed by many others who had dealings with them.

Yesterday the Secret Service denied the Aldrich claim that bodyguards kept a "CIA" log — for "cover your ass" — on the times that the President went missing.

Today's *US News and World Report* claims that Mr Clinton could elude protectors by using a secret White House underground passage from the Oval Office to the family wing. It was built during Ronald Reagan's tenure to enable the President to escape terrorist attacks.



Returning US servicemen from Saudi Arabia are welcomed in Florida yesterday

King Fahd 'poised to abdicate'

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

SPECULATION is mounting in Spain that King Fahd of Saudi Arabia may shortly renounce his throne and retire to the Costa del Sol.

Since suffering a stroke last November, the 75-year-old King has been unable to walk more than a few steps at a time and is largely confined to bed. Most state business is now conducted by Crown Prince Abdullah, his half-brother. The recent terrorist attack in Dhahran has highlighted the king's fragility and it appears he is now inclined to see out the rest of his life undisturbed.

His Mar-Mar Palace, built in 1976, is a replica of the White House in Washington. A surge of activity has been reported there recently.



King Fahd: owns palace on the Costa del Sol

US general claims Saudis rejected base security plea

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

IN a further falling-out between allies, a US general has accused Saudi authorities of twice refusing American requests to expand the security perimeter next to the building that was shattered by last week's lorry bomb.

Yesterday the Saudis finally agreed to move the fence and work began immediately. In another security measure, travel restrictions were imposed on US forces, confining them to base when off-duty.

President Clinton led an emotional memorial service at Eglin Air Force base in Florida, home to 12 of the 19 American airmen who were killed. As he had in Oklahoma City, Mr Clinton showed his skills as mourner-in-chief for the nation at times of tragedy.

He hugged a young boy who had lost his father and privately met other bereaved relatives and the wounded.

He said: "We stand with you in sorrow and outrage that they were taken before their time, felled by the hands of hatred in an act of savagery matched only by its cowardice."

The US Air Force had come in for intense criticism for placing concrete barriers only 35 yards from the block of flats where the victims died. Brigadier General Terry Schwallier, commander of the base near

Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia, said American officers had asked the Saudis last November and again in March for permission to increase the buffer zone to about 130 yards, the distance agreed to yesterday. The requests were made because of concerns about security, General Schwallier said, but they were rejected with the comment: "No, not at this time."

A Saudi official told *The Washington Post* he had no information about the American requests. He insisted that the security in place last Tuesday, the night of the explosion, was exactly the level agreed by a joint US-Saudi team which had reached a consensus after conducting surveys.

William Perry, US Defence Secretary, visited the site and again insisted that the barriers had saved lives. At the same time, though, he betrayed his concern by appointing a retired army general to conduct a full inquiry into security at the barracks, which houses more than half the 5,000 members of the US Air Force serving in Saudi Arabia.

The latest revelation of a dispute follows complaints that FBI agents were unable to interrogate four Saudis accused of setting off another bomb last November.

Farrakhan to rewrite history at Independence Day rally

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

EXACTLY 220 years after Thomas Jefferson presented the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, Louis Farrakhan will visit the city to again sign the decree he claims was responsible for America's first civil rights violation.

The controversial leader of the Nation of Islam organisation contends that flaws in the famous wording of the original declaration have led to the decline of America. He will sign an amended version at a rally on Independence

Day on Thursday at which he will call on the American people, and particularly blacks, not to relinquish any personal responsibility to government.

The Rev James Bevel, a former strategist for Martin Luther King and chairman of the Declaration of Independence co-signers' convention, said communities throughout America recognised the need for amendments to the document with which colonists first asserted their liberty from Britain on July 4, 1776. "We

accept the initial wording of the declaration that 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men," Mr Bevel said.

"But then it states that the Government derives its powers from the Consent of the Governed. We Americans are not like the British. We are not subjects, we are citizens. The wording is a violation of the right to govern the self and assumes the right to murder the governed for the good of the governed."

Under the "new" declaration, Americans are asked to derive their power "from being in obedience to the Creator and serving the health, interest, rights, and needs of the people". Although the wording appears innocuous, the presence of Mr Farrakhan in a Jeffersonian role is certain to be seen as yet another publicity stunt to widen his influence among blacks.

After calling on hundreds of thousands of blacks last year to visit Washington for the Million Man March, Mr Farrakhan since has been under investigation for alleged links to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Israelis attack Netanyahu for adopting White House style

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

WHEN Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's right-wing Prime Minister, visits the White House for talks next week he will be accompanied by Sara, his third wife, their two young sons and a *metapelet*, the Hebrew term for "mother's help". This break with tradition is not welcomed by all Israelis.

The decision to take the family — or that part of it which is now together, since he has an 18-year-old daughter from a previous marriage who lives in the United States — is seen as an attempt by Mr Netanyahu's advisers to soften his machismo image with the American public. It is also described as a further step towards the "Americanisation" of the Israeli Govern-

ment — the result of a change in the law making him the first Prime Minister to be directly elected.

Mr Netanyahu has begun to impose a US presidential style on his administration. Two new agencies, the National Security Council and the Council of Economic Advisers, named after their Washington counterparts, have been created and there are suggestions that Sara Netanyahu is about to emulate Hillary Clinton as a full-time First Lady.

A leak that such a move was planned prompted an angry reaction from The Movement For Quality Government. The pressure group claimed the American innovations would be "a breach of proper public administration".

The *Maariv* newspaper reported yesterday that during the White House visit, when the Clinton Administration will roll out the red carpet in an attempt to make amends for its unabashed support for the election loser, Shimon Peres, Mr Netanyahu's sons, Avner and Yair, will be taken on trips to the Washington Zoo and the Space Museum. A playpen for them is being built in the prime ministerial jet.

Tom Segov, a leading columnist, wrote: "There is no reason to drag the kids to Washington. The in-flight crib will photograph well, but even the US will not love Netanyahu for his children. They will love him when he withdraws the Israeli Army from Hebron."

'White tribe' uses parrot alarms

FROM REUTERS IN JAKARTA

A MYSTERIOUS white-skinned tribe, which uses parrots to warn of approaching strangers, has been seen in Indonesia's remote Irian Jaya province, the official Antara news agency said yesterday.

Villagers in the Bintuni region, south of the mainly

unexplored Bird's Head Peninsula in western Irian Jaya, saw members of the tribe, described as tall and white-skinned, last month, Antara said. "The unidentified tribe is believed to be living in a small settlement near the upper reaches of the Wiriagar River," the agency quoted a schoolteacher in Bintuni town as saying. "They were seen last month by villagers

seeking firewood in the jungle."

The tribesmen had tame parrots which would warn of approaching strangers, at which point they would vanish into the dense jungles, it said. Efforts are being made to check the reports but the area is remote.

Most Irianese are dark and ethnically related to the people of Papua New Guinea.

Australian euthanasia law faces challenge

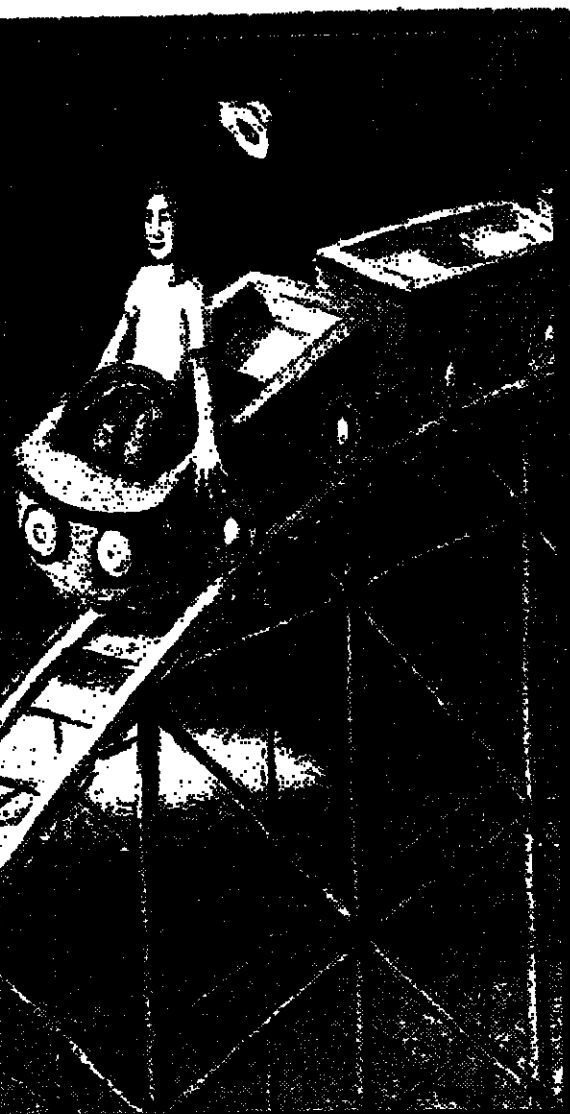
FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

LEGISLATION allowing doctors to perform voluntary euthanasia on the terminally ill will become effective in Australia's Northern Territory today. But as opposition to the law mounted over the weekend, the chances of anyone being able to take advantage of the legislation appeared to be remote.

Philip Nitschke, a Northern Territory doctor who has campaigned for voluntary euthanasia, said: "We are seeing some powerful groups here working damned hard to subvert legislation which is good for the people."

Because of the threat of legal action, including murder charges, Dr Nitschke is unlikely to find other doctors willing to help him. Under the new law, two doctors and a psychiatrist have to approve a patient's request for lethal medication.

The Terminally Ill Act will be challenged by the Australian Medical Association, the church and "right to life" groups at the Supreme Court in Darwin today. If that fails, federal MPs in Canberra will debate a Bill to override the Northern Territory law.



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A new dating method may mean rewriting history

Ringing changes

THE timetable of the ancient world may have to be rewritten to match the record of tree-rings found in timber and charcoal from Turkey and Greece.

Many dates in the civilisations of Egypt and the Near East are estimates, worked out by counting backwards from lists of kings. But pieces of timber found in archaeological sites or ancient buildings hold the key to a much more precise dating method.

Trees store in their annual growth rings a pattern of the seasons. The rings vary in size, each successive ring recording a single year. By matching the patterns on different pieces of timber, whose dates overlap, it is possible to build up complete records of rings over many centuries, which can then be matched against samples of unknown date.

A team from the Universities of Cornell, Heidelberg and Reading has now reported that they have established a tree-ring record more than 1500 years long, starting in 2220 BC and ending in 718 BC. The new chronology was derived from timber and charcoal from several sites in Anatolia, including the Midas Mound at Gordium, built in 718 BC as a burial chamber and named after King Midas.

The problem with a sequence of rings, however long, is anchoring it to a fixed date so that you know which ring represents which year. Dr Peter Kimbim, of Cornell University, and colleagues report in *Nature* that they have been able to do this.

First they dated the wood by carbon-



SCIENCE BRIEFING

Nigel Hawkes

dating the rings in ten-year intervals, and matching the pattern of the carbon dates with similar patterns found in European wood. But this leaves some uncertainty, only dating the rings to within 100 years.

To get an exact year, they claim that one anomalous ring — an exceptionally wide one, representing a year of remarkable growth — must coincide with a volcanic eruption that occurred on the island of Thera, near Crete.

This eruption has been detected in tree-ring data from other places, and dated to 1628 BC. Using this to anchor its Anatolian chronology, the team now believes that it will be possible to put exact dates on many artefacts hitherto dated only by guesswork. To do so "might provide a solution to many currently impenetrable or ambiguous issues in eastern Mediterranean archaeology", they argue. "Long-standing assumptions and conventions in both Egyptian and Old World chronology will need to be re-examined."

The result would be to set back the dates of ancient Egypt and the Minoan civilisation in Greece by almost a century, something other archaeologists may be reluctant to accept.

The British archaeologist Colin Renfrew is enthusiastic about the method, but cautious about the result. In particular, he is unsure why a volcanic eruption should have produced growth rings at least three times wider than normal. He feels there is too much supposition in the arguments for all doubt to be banished.

Sleeping through the performance

A CENTURY and a half after anaesthesia was invented, a method has finally been found for ensuring that a patient is really unconscious before the surgeon begins. By playing a series of clicks into the patient's ear and monitoring the brain's response, a Cambridge team can distinguish when the patient is sufficiently sedated neither to feel nor to remember the operation.

Garth Jones, Professor of Anaesthesiology at Cambridge, says that the system is now being used on patients to gather experience. When perfected, it could be used routinely in certain types of operation, including Caesareans, cardiac surgery and accident cases.

In use the system requires just a set of hearing-aid headphones and three electrodes, two attached behind the ears and one on the forehead. The prototype cost between £5,000 and £6,000 to build, so Professor Jones does not envisage them in every operating theatre.

The trail of the lonesome pine

BOTANISTS in Australia have succeeded in growing 500 seedlings of the Wollemi pine, a tree from the age of the dinosaurs which was rediscovered in a gorge in the Wollemi National Park in New South Wales in 1994. Just 30 wild specimens survived in the inaccessible gorge, whose exact location has remained secret to protect the trees.

Now knee-high, the seedlings have proved easy to grow. "We are delighted surprised that they are growing so well," a researcher at the Mount Annan Botanical Gardens, near Campbelltown, told the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Meanwhile, a sample of the pine sent to the US has been analysed at Montana State University and was found to contain taxol, the cancer drug that has been extracted from the bark of the Pacific Yew.

The most remarkable thing remains the isolation of the trees. Despite intensive searching no other examples have been found in the 500,000 hectare national park.



Piers Corbyn calls the Met Office "narrow-minded". Recognising his work, he claims, "would mean a fundamental change in meteorology as we know it"

Storms and windfalls

Piers Corbyn will place 20 bets with bookmakers William Hill this month. Judging by his success over the past eight years, he is likely to win 16 of them. Not bad for someone taking a £660 flutter on the great British weather.

This is Mr Corbyn's unconventional way of proving to the world — and to the Meteorological Office in particular — that he really has discovered a way to predict the weather, days, months and even a year in advance.

The Met Office rejects that the weather can be forecast accurately much more than five days ahead, and complains that Mr Corbyn refuses to reveal his technique. It also

Weather wizard or living in cloud-cuckoo-land? Whatever they say, Piers Corbyn's forecasts have beaten the Met Office and the bookmaker

says, controversially, that his forecasts are capable of being interpreted somewhat loosely.

For Mr Corbyn, however, there is a sweet irony in the fact that the Met Office sets the odds for his bets, and is being proved wrong with embarrassing regularity. What is more, about 200 clients, including insurance companies, farmers and even Yorkshire Electricity, trust him enough to plan their businesses around his predictions. His dispute with the Met Office stretches back to 1988, and is featured this week in a BBC documentary.

Mr Corbyn's starting premise is simple — the Sun affects the weather. Like a restless entity, the Sun does not pour out its energy in a uniform, steady way. Its bubbling surface spurts and spits like a volcano, throwing out magnetic fireballs and streams of particles. These outbursts buffet the magnetic field surrounding the Earth, and have a knock-on effect on the atmosphere and thus on the weather.

Though unpredictable, this violent restlessness can be gauged to a crude degree by looking at sunspots. The num-

I predict the first half of this month will see heatwaves

ber and positions of these tiny, dark blobs on the solar surface change rhythmically, with one complete rhythm taking about 11 years.

Using these as a rough guide to the Sun's fiery moods, Mr Corbyn plots out variations in all aspects of solar behaviour, such as solar flares. He examines the periodicities of these phenomena at any given time, and then flicks through historical records to find whether the same numbers have cropped up before. If he finds a match it is, he claims, a good bet that the weather this time around will be similar.

He has christened his method the Solar Weather Technique (SWT). "It predicts weather types rather than details," he says. "It is particularly good at predicting extremes."

The men at the Met Office have a very different outlook. They believe the weather is described by chaos theory and



ANJANA AHUJA

is therefore inherently unpredictable. The Met Office model considers only what goes on in the atmosphere, the thin layer of gases that envelope the planet.

To ignore what goes on outside the planet is nonsense," Mr Corbyn says. "Events on the Sun are known to affect the Earth's magnetic field. So to say they don't affect the atmosphere is ridiculous."

The Met Office, according to Corbyn, says that feeding its chaos theory into more powerful computers could result in better forecasts. He says that merely projecting current climates forward will get them nowhere. He calls the Met Office "narrow-minded" and accuses it of closing its eyes to his work, because recognising the SWT "would mean a fundamental change in meteorology as we know it".

How do the two methods match up? Mr Corbyn says his consistent winnings with William Hill are a pretty good indicator of how the Met Office model and SWT compare. Readers of *The Times* science page could even try it themselves — he predicts the first half of this month will see heatwaves, and the second half will be cooler and unsettled with thunderstorms.

Mr Corbyn is, however, cagey about revealing the names of independent assessors, although he quotes a NASA risk analyst who published a favourable study of the accuracy of his predictions. A quiet-spoken, physics graduate with a masters in astrophysics, he is very keen to demonstrate his success. In his pleasant office at the South Bank Technopark in southeast London, there are lots of graphs showing how accurate his predictions are. One app-

ears to have forecast heavy rain in Italy for the end of June. Last week foreign news pages were filled with pictures of the devastating floods in Tuscany.

Other prized possessions are several copies of fat cheques from William Hill. One, a cheque for £2,291, is left illuminated on the overhead projector while we break for tea.

He is also proud that Weather Action, his forecasting business, sponsors four research students. It is clear that he is desperately wants to be viewed as a serious scientist. And, it has to be said, his forecasting success shows he has something valid to say.

Despite its hostility, he wants to work with the Met Office to produce medium-range forecasts (five to ten days ahead). This would give him the recognition he craves and funds for further research.

But Mr Corbyn will not play by the rules. He has, until

now, been very vague about the details of his technique. As the Met Office points out, his reliance goes against the widely accepted ethic that scientific endeavour should be an open activity.

"One reason I won't reveal it is that my business depends on it," Mr Corbyn says. "We don't get any state funding." To his credit, he has sought advice about patenting his technique. But since the SWT would probably qualify as a discovery, a patent would not be allowed. Others would, quite legitimately, be able to cash in on his work.

He says: "I do plan to publish when the time is right." This could be within a couple of years, but the idea of revealing all in the year 2000 seems to tickle him.

To anyone meeting him, or watching the documentary, it is clear that Mr Corbyn is a man motivated not by money but by a fascination for the science involved. If I were to place one bet this month, I would wager that the allure of unassailable scientific credibility will win out well before the end of the decade.

QED: Sunshine with Scattered Showers, BBC1, Thursday July 4, 10pm.

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The importance of being Terry

During the three weeks of Euro 96 he inspired the England team and rebuilt the country's pride in its national game. Terry Venables talks about tactics, philosophy and losing weight

We meet on his manor, a small hotel just up from his club, Scribes West, in Kensington High Street. The man who made the nation feel good about its football, and for a while, itself, comes into the lobby alone, no minders. He is wearing well cut but unremarkable Saturday morning clothes: dark blue shirt, jacket, muted tie, dark slacks. For the first time in weeks, his gear bears neither his name, nor his initials, nor anybody else's. I don't think he's a designer man, Mr Venables, despite his reputation for being a bit flash.

Actually, he does not strike me as flash at all. The trademark tan is well topped up, the greying hair expensively managed, but of heavy gold jewellery, not a sign, of heavy bold aftershave, not a sniff. His demeanour is serious, a little guarded, emotionally controlled, modest. His syntax betrays a self-consciousness, a man intelligent well beyond his education.

He is 53, from what used to be called the respectable working class. Very respectable, very respectful, and anxious to be seen to be so. His mother, from Welsh mining stock, brought her boy up to be patriotic, diligent and above all, loyal. The mature Venables, very much, epitomises the attributes of 1950s Essex rather than what that county came to represent in the 1980s.

The team spirit of the last few weeks, the "collective responsibility" for individual mistakes, whether in the upper class cabin of a Cathay Pacific aircraft or on the penalty spot at Wembley — that spirit comes straight from a Dagenham council estate of 40 years ago. Terry sticks by his players, they stick by him. He is famous for his loyalty to his men, just as Sir Alf Ramsey, another Dagenham boy, was in 1966.

So you ask Terry what he said to Gareth Southgate in those poignant, stunned moments after the young man's tragic miss last Wednesday night and he cannot, or will not, remember. "I just tried to help, just tried to help," he says. And he stayed up that night, counselling Southgate? "Yeah, we spoke for quite a long time. It was too early really to discuss it. It's the bruise syndrome. The feeling's dead anyway. They'll be a time when you can talk about it and help in a big way. His manager will do that." And will he

continue, as it were, to monitor Southgate's emotional convalescence? "Not really. Hopefully, I'll come across the lads and chat to them but it's not my business now."

That is Terry's other defining characteristic: his straightforward, almost brutally old-fashioned masculinity. He showed a little tenderness to Southgate, but now Southgate must get on with it, just as Terry would. Terry was a penalty taker as a player, and is, metaphorically, as a man. Men like him for this, especially football men. Despite his intelligence, his excursions into business, writing, pundit-



ROBERT CRAMPTON

ry, despite the transferability of his personality into other more complex worlds, he remains fundamentally a man at home with the martial male simplicities of the pitch, of pain exchanged, of being "up for it" of giving and earning respect.

In the three weeks leading up to last Wednesday, Venables lived in a closed, male, football world. He left the team hotel in Buckinghamshire only to travel to training and games. He loved it. "The best experience I've had in my football career. Fascinating. Better than Barcelona" (which he managed) because it was here, it was about England. We got everything behind us and they got us going.

How does it feel to be one of the most respected men in the country, it wasn't always so, was it? "As a corby one, it's treating the two impostors just the same, isn't it?"

He would get up at 7.30am, drink two cups of black coffee — no breakfast — and "go through my bits of paper for the day". At 9am, seven days a week, the rest of the coaching staff would come to his suite.

"I had a room off my room with a big table. I put my tactics board on the table and we'd do half an hour with the blues and yellows. We were blue and the opposition were yellow." He would receive a press briefing at 9.30am and then travel to the training session. "I would like to have done more, but I only dealt with tactical work."

Venables loves his tactics, the intricacies of the game that have fascinated the most unlikely people since Euro 96 kicked off. I pick a moment when the tactics board paid off, the moment when the tournament came to life for millions of fans, the moment that Paul Gascoigne put England 2-0 up against Scotland. He is off: "It shows the value of having wide players. They make space inside for other players to run into. The ball goes. I think, from Sheringham to Anderton. Gascoigne makes his run inside the full back who has come out to mark Anderton. If Anderton stops the ball at that moment, it's finished. But what did happen — pleasingly because we were all shouting from the line, 'Knock it in', though he couldn't have heard us — was Anderton passed it right in Gascoigne's path."

He goes on: "Gascoigne can see the guy coming out. Hendry, and he shapes to volley it with his left foot. Now Hendry's desperate to stop the shot and he's vulnerable. He flings himself, and Gascoigne's now able to hook it over his head. Gascoigne then watches the ball all the way onto his foot. I thought his concentration was wonderful."

So there was an element of deception in what Gascoigne did, as when a tennis player disguises a short "Correct. The combination of disguise and accuracy is the thing." So when people talk about Gascoigne having football intelligence, this is what they mean? "Yes. Gascoigne has that. And at pace as well. At pace. He wasn't standing, he was running. Top class." Venables loves his Gazza too. Yes, he will be at Gascoigne's wedding, the blinding ceremony, today. No, he will not be the best man. "I'll just laugh, he makes me laugh."

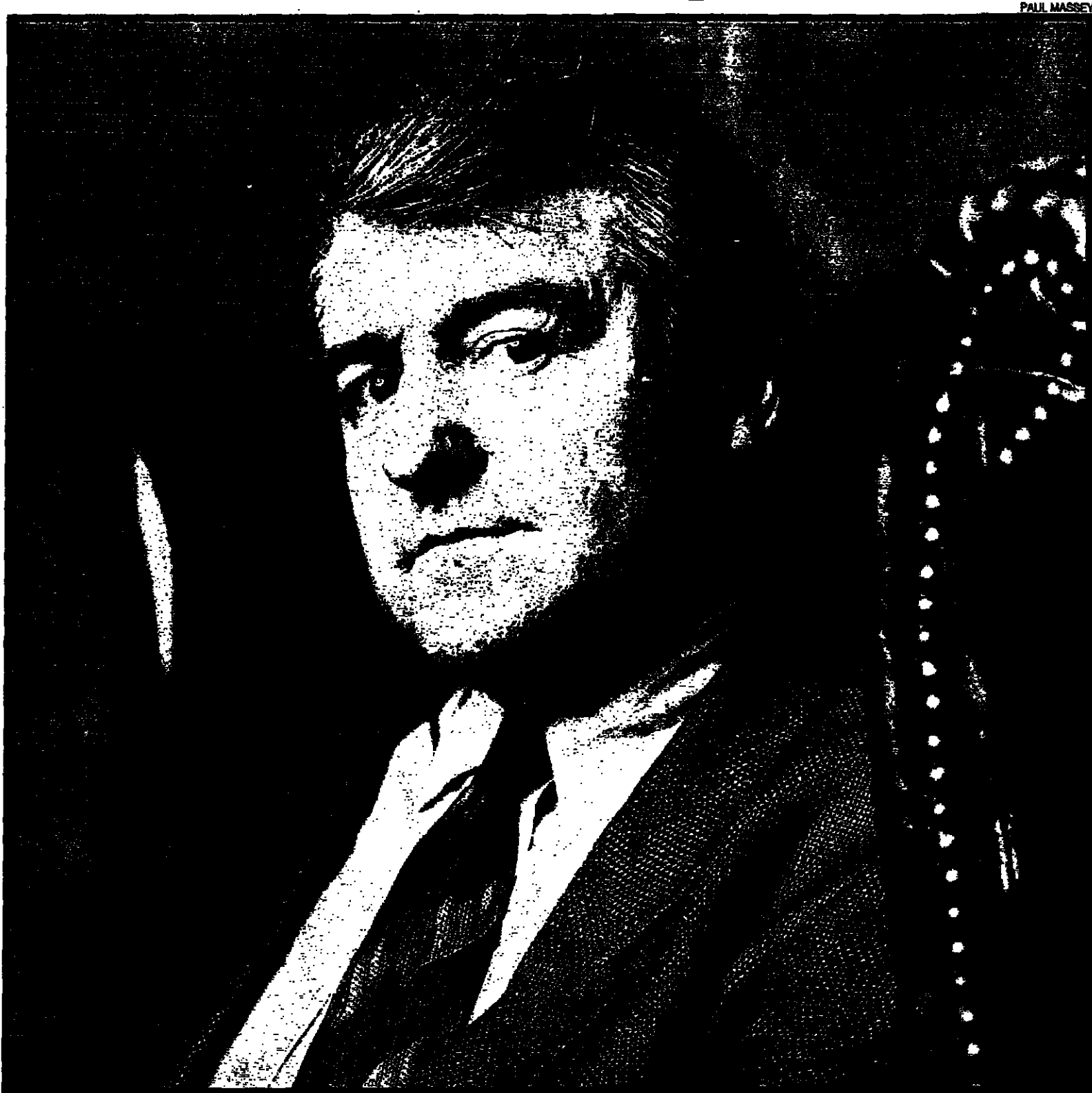
After the morning training session, Venables would meet the media, over lunchtime, but not lunch. No breakfast, and now no lunch either. "I was trying to lose weight. Lost two-and-a-half stone in the last year. I was touching 15 stone, couldn't believe it. Twelve-and-a-half now." Indeed, he is the first England boss in a long time to leave what Graham Taylor called "the impossible job" looking fitter than when he started.

He would get back to the hotel at 3pm, go up to his room and watch videos of the training and the other matches, alone. "That was thinking time, sorting out problem areas. Do that, down for dinner at 7.30pm." He didn't eat anything until 7.30? "No." Didn't he get hungry? "Time just went. It really made me look forward to dinner." After dinner it was back to tactics, bed by 11pm. He didn't see his wife, Yvette, for three weeks. Did he phone her? "Oh yeah. I wasn't going to ignore her completely."



'As a player and as a man he is a penalty taker'

get let down now and again but you'll win more than you lose. I don't scream and shout, I just say you're showing a lack of respect in that situation. That's enough. If you shout and scream it's like a nagging wife. You turn off. "I read an article many years ago, it was in Harley Street in a doctor's waiting room. It was about a captain in Vietnam. He said the day of the sergeant major has gone. It's gotta be more skillful than 'Do as I tell you'. Same time you've gotta be in there with them, so they know you're in



Terry Venables believes that football has been underrated as a morale booster and cites the extraordinary emotion in England during Euro 96

The players would watch videos, play cards and snooker. Did he have time for any of that? He snorts. "Get out. Never had time for anything. No trips to the cinema with the squad, as Ramsey had organised in 1966? "No, we had a large-screen video, big as that quadrangle of wooden effect over there... you cannot go in a coach to the cinema these days, be like a bunch of woofers coming down the street."

They were too. But for the width of a post the delicious expectation could have lin-

gered a few days longer. Venables was very aware of the feeling in the country in those ten days between the victory over Scotland and the heart-stopping defeat by Germany, very conscious of his responsibility.

"Football's been underrated for what it can do if we get it right. We've witnessed, even for a brief moment, how we can be in unity and what a wonderful feeling it is again. We've forgot what that feeling was like." That sounds corny,

but it is nonetheless true. Whatever Terry does next — busting off, he won't discuss his future, "now I'm out of work, I've got to get going" — he will be remembered as the man who provided that elixir. Respect.

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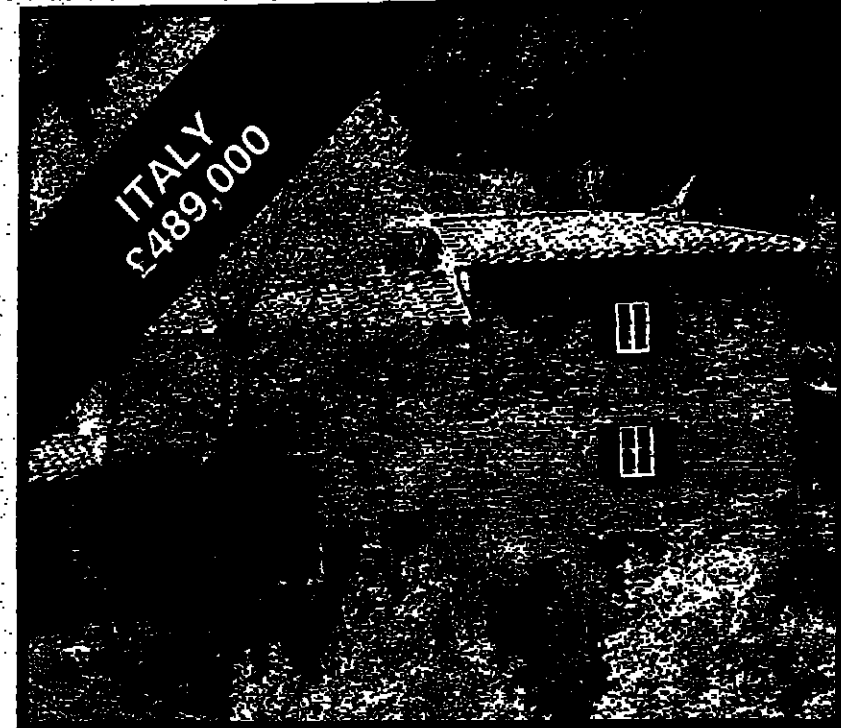
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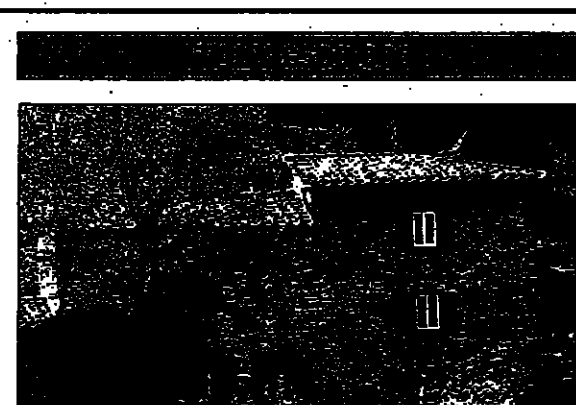


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The Great Escape: a global guide to fantasy house hunting



Luxury apartment overlooking beach
4 beds, 3 receps, 3 baths, kitchen, maid's quarters, large balcony. Special features: Access to sauna, gym and swimming pool. Garage space for two cars. Only steps away from the sandy beach and Ipanema district which is one of Rio's most exclusive.



18th-century farmhouse
Master bedroom with en-suite dressing-room and bath, 2 beds, 2 receps, kitchen, 2 baths. Special features: Split-level lounge, 25 acres terraced gardens, woodlands and olive groves, swimming pool, stunning views to Cortona.



Fully furnished villa
3 beds with en-suite bath, 3 further beds, 1 bath, fitted kitchen, sauna, gym, pool-annex with changing room and bath. Special features: In 4-acre landscaped garden with swimming pool. Open fireplaces, marble floors, poolside barbecue. Prime location on hill, 900ft above sea level.



Three-storey cottage
5 beds, 2 receps, library, 2 baths, kitchen/breakfast room. Special features: 12-acre garden. In Barvixa, a rural district 15km west of Moscow. Neighbours include Boris Yeltsin.



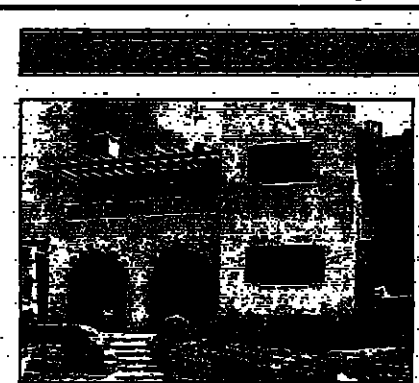
Detached house with small garden
4 beds, 3 receps, 3 baths, kitchen, library, maid's quarters. Special features: swimming-pool. Set in the exclusive Urca district, at the foot of Sugar Loaf mountain. Only area in Rio that doesn't have slums and/or high-rise buildings.



Restored stone farmhouse
5 beds, 2 receps, 1 bath, separate restored barn apartment and stable apartment. Special features: Stone fireplace, raised swimming pool, rural views. Near Mercatale, Valdarno.



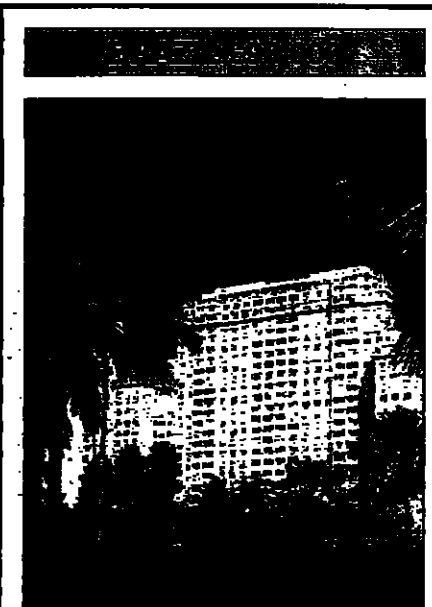
ENGLAND
£500,000
Character house in lawned gardens
2 beds with en-suite bath and dressing rooms, 3 further beds, 3 receps, 1 bath, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room. Special features: Landscaped gardens, split-level sun lounge area, beamed effect ceilings, lead windows. In Esher, Surrey. Built in 1930s with later additions.



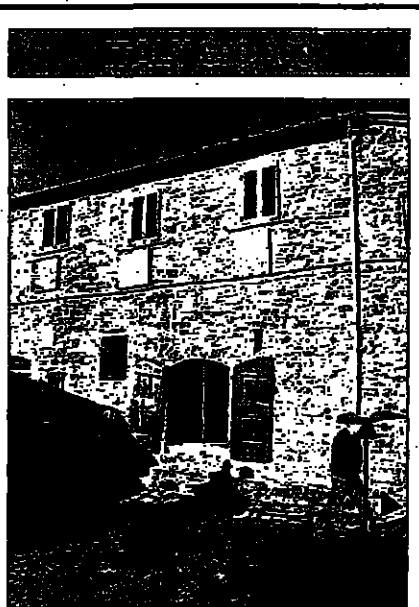
Fully furnished villa in 4-acre plot
Master bedroom, en-suite bathroom, 3 beds, 2 receps, 2 baths, fitted kitchen. Special features: Open fire, marble floors. Swimming-pool, views of sea. In Leptos Kamares Village, luxury development in hills five miles from Paphos town.



Upmarket flat in smart Moscow district
1 bed, 1 recep, 2 baths, kitchen/breakfast room. Special features: Renovated in Western style. Concierge and security guards. Located in Tverskaya Yamskaya, close to the Kremlin. Former Communist Party officials live in this block.



Middle-floor flat in 22-storey block
3 beds, 2 receps, 2 baths, maid quarters. Special features: Good view across the city and Sugar Loaf mountain. 1950s block in the leafy middle-class district of Flamengo near city centre. Surrounded by a park and Rio's older architecture.



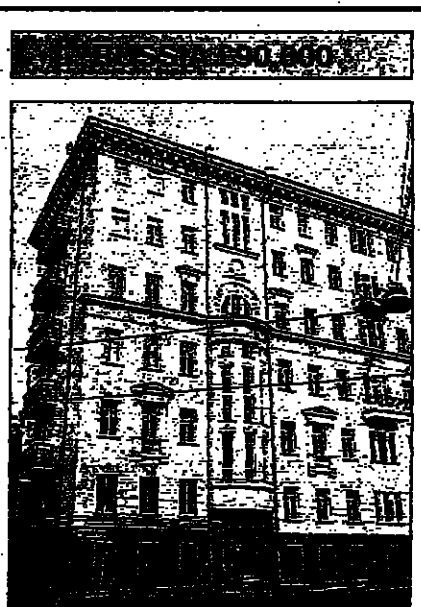
Old stone house
8 rooms. Special features: Set in tiny hamlet near Loro Ciuffenna with spectacular position high above the Arno Valley. Large garden, needs some work.



£250,000
Grade II listed village house
6 beds, 2 receps, study, 1 bath, kitchen/breakfast room. Special features: Open fireplaces, flagstone floors, exposed beams and trusses, attractive garden. Located in Sandford Village, NW of Oxford. 1 1/2 hours from London.



Villa in landscaped garden
2 beds, 1 recep, 1 bath, fitted kitchen. Special features: Open fire, marble floors. Views of sea. Unfurnished (furnished extra £4,000). To add swimming-pool, £20,000. 2 miles from island's western beaches (same location as above).



Small flat in apartment block
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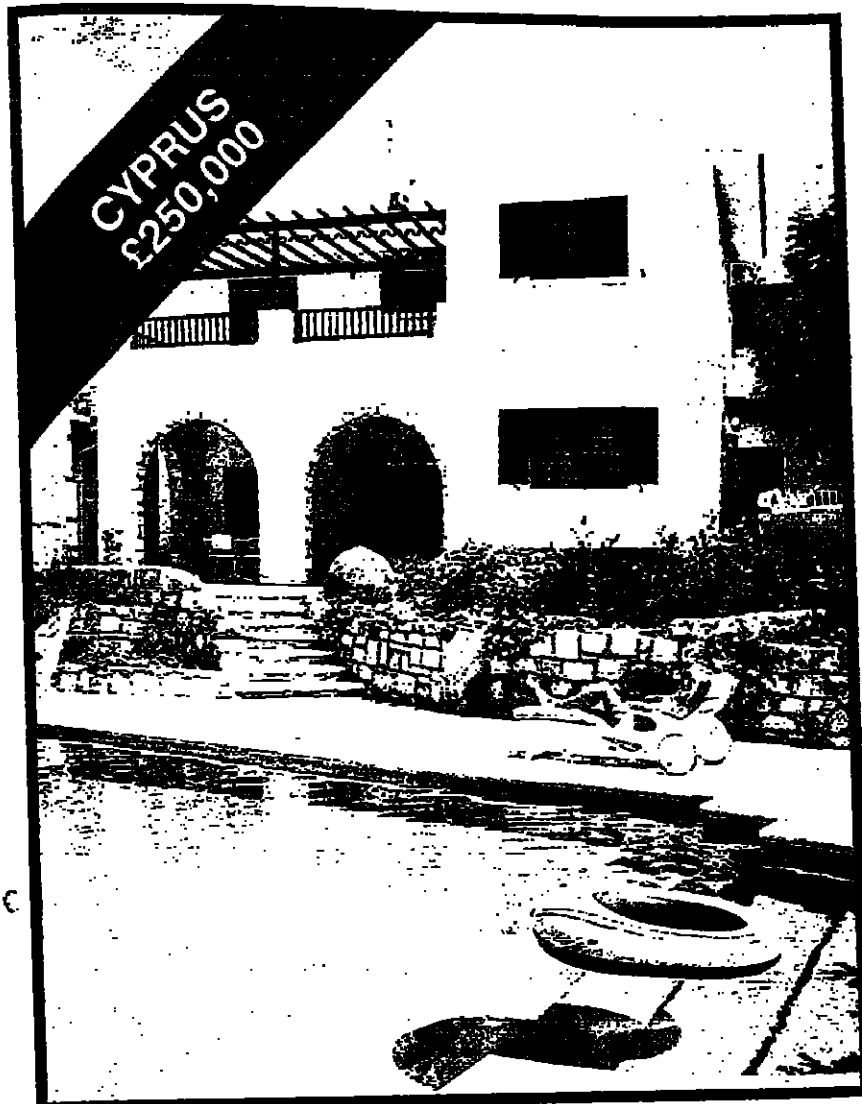
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Large house with stunning views across Oslo Fjord
3 beds, 2 receps, farm style kitchen, conservatory, terrace. Special features: Indoor swimming pool, sauna.



£250,000

Detached family house, northwest suburb of Oslo
3 beds, 2 receps, 2 baths, kitchen. Special features: Pine floors, underfloor heating in bathrooms, sunny terrace, typical Norwegian fireplace. Large garden, 2 garages.



£90,000

Central Oslo flat, 1 bed, 1 recep, 1 bath, kitchen
Special features: Designer bathroom, small garden, parking. Block sold to all owners, who share costs.

AUSTRALIA £500,000



Large home in Vauduse, Sydney
4 beds, 2 receps, kitchen/breakfast room, 2 baths. Special features: Expansive front terraces, alfresco dining area, courtyard, solar-heated salt water pool. Three car garage. Superb views, prestigious suburb.

CANADA £500,000



Detached luxury home, Ottawa
6 beds, 3 baths, sunken living-room, recreation room in basement, office space, family area, servant quarters. Special features: Large indoor swimming pool. Set in beautiful Rockcliffe Park.

GERMANY £250,000



Detached house near centre of Bonn
4 beds, 2 receps, 2 baths, kitchen. Special features: 600 sq m garden, double garage. Quiet neighbourhood.

SOUTH AFRICA £250,000



Large mansion in Johannesburg
4 beds, 4 receps, 3 baths, kitchen, utility room. Special features: Large grounds. Properties in Johannesburg are particularly cheap as the city has an appalling crime rate. You pay for size, privacy and security.

AUSTRALIA £250,000



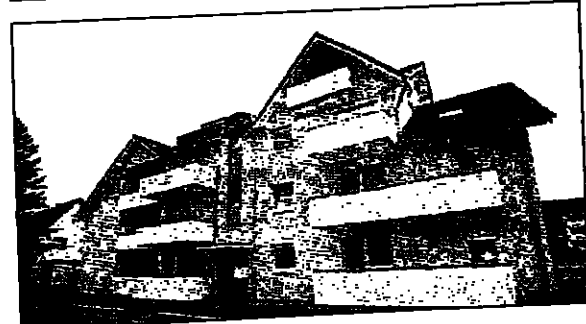
Bungalow, Wahroonga, Sydney
5 beds, 3 receps, games room, swimming pool overlooking bushland reserve. Located on Sydney's upper north shore. 25 mins drive from Sydney Harbour Bridge.

CANADA £250,000



Detached family home, Ottawa
5 beds, master with ensuite bath, 1 recep, large kitchen, recreation room in basement, guest suite with own bath. Special features: Pine panelled walls, wood-burning fireplace. Stunning views of Dow's Lake.

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1 bed, 2 receps inc kitchen, 1 bath. Special features: Block known for its modern architectural style.

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AUSTRALIA £90,000



Victorian terraced house, Sydney
2 beds, 1 recep, 1 bath. Special features: Small courtyard at rear. Built in 1880. Located in Newton, increasingly trendy part of city.

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Is Timbuktu as cheap as it seems?

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Choosing where to buy property is a business for hardheads, not dreamers. The calculations can be complex and the results may seem perverse.

A British computer millionaire moving to New Zealand has just decided to buy a spanking new house — by the River Mole in Surrey. He

calculates that property movements in Britain, and the progress of sterling should enable him to buy a palace in the Antipodes by 1999.

Buying in France seemed a clever move to friends in the mid-1970s. They congratulated themselves as prices in Normandy outstripped the market. But they were dismayed to discover, when they wanted to return, that property prices in southern England had increased twelvefold.

Recently, the estate agents Knight Frank compiled a guide comparing earnings prospects and property prices in the world's principal cities.

Using a banker or lawyer, 35, as their model they found the type who might inhabit a three or four-bedroom house in Chelsea, and pay four times his annual salary, could have a three-bedroom apartment in Laurel Heights, San Francisco, for only 1.5 times his annual earnings.

In New York, a two-bedroom apartment on the Upper East Side would cost 2.6 times his annual earnings, while in

Paris the equivalent would be a three-bedroom flat in Neuilly, at 3.75 times the salary. In Bombay on the other hand, a two or three-bedroom apartment in the suburbs would cost more than 11.5 years' salary. Sydney might seem the best buy — a four-bedroom house on the North Shore costs only 2.5 times the annual paypacket.

ROBIN YOUNG

TOMORROW

House prices in other countries ... and how to compare the cost of living

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ARTS THE WEEK AHEAD

MUSICALS

By Jeeves, the Lloyd Webber and Ayckbourn musical, comes to the Duke of York's
OPENS: Tuesday
REVIEW: Thursday

DANCE

The Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker steps into the Festival Hall
OPENS: Wednesday
REVIEW: Friday

BOOKS

Paul Theroux dips into personal experience for his new novel, *My Other Life*
IN THE SHOPS: Now
REVIEW: Thursday

FILMS

A cult television series gets a high-tech, big-budget gloss as *Mission: Impossible* goes widescreen
OPENS: Friday
REVIEW: Thursday

Master of all trades

José Feliciano
Jazz Café

MUSICIANS who skip from Jimi Hendrix's *Purple Haze* to the smoother contours of the Nat King Cole hit *Unforgettable* are decidedly few and far between. Though subject to erratic changes of pace and a dubious sound mix, the opening night of José Feliciano's residency was still an occasion to savour.

Nearly 30 years on, *Light My Fire* remains the big showstopper. The number also turned up on a recent easy-listening compilation, suggesting that, with a bit of luck, the Puerto Rican-born singer-guitarist could benefit from the acclaim being showered on the newly hip Burt Bacharach.

Feliciano deserves the attention. A glance at his new album, *Present Tense*, in which he revisits many of his old favourites, confirms how provocative and versatile a talent he still is.

Ray Charles is the name that invariably comes to mind in any discussion of Feliciano — not simply for the trite reason that they are both blind and fond of gospel melisma, but because they both display a happy disregard for musical categories. Charles ignored the unwritten rule that R&B performers should not sing country; Feliciano obviously finds nothing wrong in mixing a cocktail of his funky instrumental *Affirmation*, John Lennon's *Jealous Guy*, and the hillybilly refrain of *Mule Skinner Blues*.

In concert the transition between different idioms was not always smoothly handled. Marching briskly from one set-piece to another, Feliciano did not allow enough time for the concert to find its own rhythm. And, in the cramped concrete and stainless-steel setting of the Jazz Café, his band also sounded over-amplified. More acoustic songs would have been welcome.

But if the jukebox randomness of the material was sometimes disconcerting, Feliciano's voice attacked each melody with absolute conviction, the soulful phrasing never falling into histrionics.

CLIVE DAVIS

ROCK: David Sinclair on the massive Masters of Music concert in Hyde Park



A magnificently eye-patched Roger Daltrey leads members of the Who in the first live performance of *Quadrophenia* for more than 20 years

After the recent grand set-pieces by young whippersnappers like Oasis, rock's ancient regime struck back on Saturday with a show that was as far removed from the cutting edge as it is possible to imagine. It was ostensibly the centrepiece of National Music Day, a benefit for the Prince's Trust and an advertising jamboree for its corporate sponsor, Mastercard. But in reality the Masters of Music concert was the unofficial launch of Pete Townshend's next putative Broadway show, a revamped version of the Who's 1973 album, *Quadrophenia*.

Prince Charles arrived moments before the group formerly known as the Who took the stage, bringing an appropriate sense of occasion to the latest unveiling of this musty "rock opera", which was already an essay in nostalgia when it was written. Quite what His Royal Highness made of Phil Daniels's linking narrative — about "doing five cartons of leapers every day" and other minutiae of the mod/drug/gang culture of the 1960s — is anybody's guess.

But many of the 150,000

Stylish sounds of yesteryear

people who had dutifully assembled on a cold, overcast day were clearly of an age to have experienced these things first hand. Their behaviour is now more sedate, but there was nevertheless a glint in the old collective eye as the band powered into side one, track one: *The Real Me*.

The problem with *Quadrophenia* as a work is that, compared to its predecessor *Tommy*, it lacks strong characters, narrative coherence and it must be said, hit songs. For Townshend as a writer, it marked the moment when hard thinking overtook the rock rocking, and most history books rightly mark it down as a concept album too far. But given the limitations of the material, this was an

engaging, energetic and faithful production which, with the aid of filmed back projections, brought what there is of the story dramatically to life. Gary Glitter gave bravura performances of *The Punk And The Godfather* and *I've Had Enough*, hurling his microphone stand around in a calamity-defying manner which had already regarded an unwary Roger Daltrey with a black eye during rehearsals. David Gilmour sang and played guitar with customary aplomb on *The Dirty Jobs*. Adrian Edmondson did his usual gurning routine in the title role of Bell Boy and there were brief appearances by Stephen Fry and a bemused Trevor McDonald, reading the news (what else?).

Amid a stage filled with horn players, backing singers and sundry other musicians, Townshend maintained a relatively low-key presence. He played acoustic guitar, and sang *Cut My Hair* seated at the piano, but delegated all electric guitar playing to the static presence of John Entwistle, belted the pugnacious sound of his bass guitar, while the magnificently eye-patched Daltrey was in fine voice and everywhere at once.

However, the revelation was drummer Zak Starkey (Ringo Starr's son), who managed to fill the late Keith Moon's shoes with sensational results, especially during the volcanic conclusion of *5.15*. He was so right for the job that you almost felt having him on

board would make it worth recovering the Who on a more permanent basis. Almost as fixtures on the rock landscape go, none is more permanent or unpredictable than Bob Dylan. With his regular band augmented by the ubiquitous Ron Wood, he played a collection of favourites, including *All Along The Watchtower*, an acoustic *Tangled Up In Blue*, *Seven Days And Highway 61 Revisited*, with a diligent application that went some way to atoning for that notorious closing set at Live Aid.

The day ended with the equally evocative Eric Clapton, also accompanied by his regular (blues) band and also focusing on the most obvious choices: a leisurely *Layla*, a sprightly *I Shot The Sheriff*, a moody *Badge*, and several blues standards including *Hoochie Coochie Man* and *Everyday I Have The Blues*. As always he sang and played beautifully and brought a rare touch of sensitivity to a concert on such a grandiose scale. But as with the others, it was a case of an artist stylishly treading water, if not actively drifting backwards.

Sympathy for the she-devil

LONDON audiences cannot get too much of Handel's *Semele*, it seems. Even after the popular run at the Royal Opera House, there was not a seat to be had at St James's, Piccadilly, on Thursday night for the concert performance under Ivor Bolton.

Nor should anyone have been disappointed, for this was a magnificent performance. The forces of the St James's Baroque Players and Singers were well prepared, and Bolton swept through each act with a palpable dramatic momentum. Many of his tempos were swift, but never uncomfortably so, and he was prepared to relax into a leisurely tempo where the expressive content demanded.

Nancy Argenta was made for the role of *Semele*: her tone is light and flexible yet warm and affecting, drawing our sympathy to a character whose overweening ambition and narcissism might otherwise repel us. The dazzling runs and florid ornamentation of *No, no, I'll take no less* stopped the show.

Paul Agnew, as her divine wooer, Jupiter, was able to encompass both the aspect of the authority figure and the ardent lover in human form. As his not unreasonably jealous consort Juno, Della Jones plundered her chest register with intimidating frequency. In hectoring mode she is undeniably effective — *Hence, Iris, hence away!* — but it was good to hear her more beguiling side too, as in her cajoling of Somnus.

Luffhansa Festival St James's, Piccadilly

The excellent Catherine Wyn-Rogers was under-employed as Ino, though she made the most of *But hark! the heavenly sphere turns round* — the loveliest music in the score; Ruth Holton took the equally modest role of Iris. Alan Ewing's Cadmus was blustery and ill-focused, Christopher Robson's Athamas a shade disengaged.

The previous evening, one of France's leading early music ensembles, Le Concert Spirituel, gave a programme of motets written for the court of Louis XIV by Paolo Lorenzani and Jean-Baptiste Lully. Lorenzani and Lully were representatives of respectively the Italian and French styles. Lorenzani's music is still little known, but Le Concert Spirituel proved powerful advocates. Hervé Niquet's vigorous direction ensured a vibrant interchange between *grands* and *petits choeurs*. The *Litanies à la Vierge* had an aptly imploring quality, and their peaceful conclusion provided one of many opportunities to admire Le Concert Spirituel's purity of intonation.

Save for one piece, the evening belonged to Lorenzani. The exception was the grand motet *Plaudite laetare Gallia*, by Lorenzani's arch-rival Lully, delivered with panache and an infectious rhythmic swing.

BARRY MILLINGTON

In four varieties

Brodsky Quartet Merchant Taylors' Hall, EC2

A PENCHANT for writing fugues is clearly one thing that Dave Brubeck and Beethoven, Kurt Weill and Mendelssohn have in common. Another is being played by the Brodsky Quartet in the sultry splendour of the Merchant Taylors' Hall as part of this year's newly adventurous City of London Festival.

This was a world premiere for Brubeck's *Chromatic Fantasy*. The four-movement quartet represents 40 densely packed minutes' worth of homage to Bach. The first movement's 12-tone theme is accompanied by a chromatic scale; that of the second movement (*Chorale*) becomes the counter-subject of the third (*Fugue*); and elements of it all work their way into the final *Chaconne*.

The result of all this earnest striving for unity turns out to be a remarkably varied quartet. Pulse and metre are juggled this way and that in the jazz-inspired rhythms of the outer movements; a sentimental elegy lies at its heart; and a sinewy academic exercise is sealed with a flurry of bravura.

Learning is worn less lightly

HILARY FINCH

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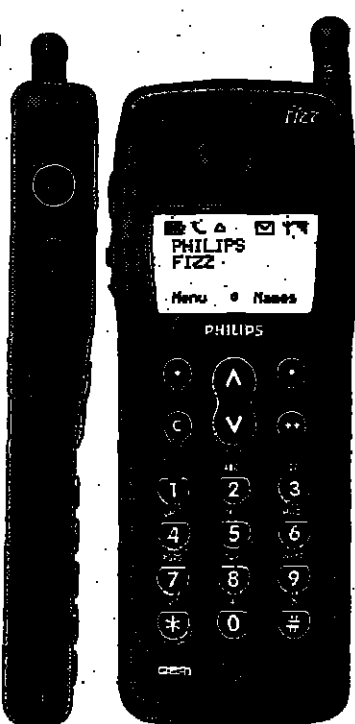
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Warmed by cold passion

Norma Bastille, Paris

IN THIS, its first staging at the Bastille, Bellini's *Norma* looks more like a Greek tragedy than a Gallic one. During the opening act the chorus, swathed in black and vocally on top form, comments on the action rather than takes part in it, apart from some mildly bellicose gestures when the Druids threaten to rise against their Roman oppressors. Norma, unwisely prophesying Rome's future fall through moral decay, becomes the victim of her own druidical descent from grace in bearing two illegitimate children by the local procurator, Pollione.

The director-designer, Yannis Kokkos, happily draws no contemporary parallels with those who preach family values while failing to abide by them: He says with a primitive and inhospitable Gaul, where the trees filling the stage are black leafless branches. It is not clear just which is the holy oak of Irminsul that Norma and her followers revere, but it is definitely winter and the right time for cutting the sacred mistletoe, preferred signal for the uprising against the Romans.

This all makes for a very sombre and rather listless first act. Even the moon, Norma's *casta diva* which she hopes will bring peace to Gaul, is allowed to throw precious little light. But Kokkos's single basic set brings dividends later when Norma admits her moral failings in a snow-covered forest and marches to a noble death amid the flames covering the rear of the stage.

It also provides a properly solemn framework for Carol Vaness's Media-like performance in the title role. She has only recently taken on the part and sections of it are still in the making, notably *Casta diva* itself, which was uncomfort-

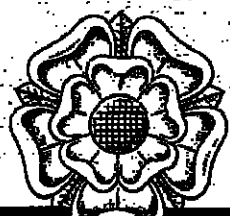
ably cautious for a soprano who is at her best when being extrovert. By Act II she was in full command, though, knife shining in the hand poised above the throats of her children. Here was the figure straight from Racine, which is probably what Kokkos was after. All her vocal opulence was now on display and the whole of the final scene was achieved with utmost dignity. Vaness must have drawn much support from having a top-class and highly experienced Adalgisa by her side.

Suzanne Mentzer was dressed as a younger and slimmer version of Norma, so explaining the switch of Pollione's favours from the top priestess to one of the underlings. But it is the voice that really counted, a rich and blessedly secure mezzo, interweaving with Vaness's creamy soprano.

Boiko-Zvetanov, replacing the scheduled Pollione, Franco Farina, at the last minute, was an impressive figure to begin with, the voice varying alarmingly in volume, but he gained in confidence. Dimitri Kavrakos was a solid Oroveso, Carlo Rizzi, the conductor, was unusually subdued, probably mindful that he had to help his tenor along during the punishing opening scene.

JOHN HIGGINS

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سكرا من الامم

Matthew Parris



■ What turns politicians into rebels: is it fate or the fact that an act of defiance leads to a taste for independence?

For months I seem to have been living with the Awkward Squad. This was the working title of a BBC producer and I gave a series of four little radio programmes we have been making about rebels and mavericks in politics, and we've stuck with it. Michael Blastland and I now feel like consultant psychiatrists to the Awkward Squad.

Our aim has been to make this a personal investigation: one surely hears enough as it is about the "issues" — issues like Teresa Gorman's Euro-scepticism, or Tam Dalyell's crusade to discover the truth about Lockerbie. But what makes a Tam or a Teresa tick? Were they dropped on their heads as babies? Are they bitter or jolly, are they ostracised in the Commons tea room or privately egged on by more conformist colleagues? Do party whips secretly admire their tormentors, and do members of the Awkward Squad secretly hanker after acceptance, and authority?

I decided to ask. My intended short chats with a handful of the Awkward Squad turned into hours of fascinating interviews. I cast my net widely to include not only famous trouble-makers, but quiet dissenters and courteous loners too: from the cool and amiable John Biffen to the still-fiery Dave Nellist, out of Parliament and expelled from the Labour Party for his militant sympathies.

Mrs Gorman reminded me of her ambition to be canonised as St Teresa of the Menopause. John Redwood refused to accept that he was a rebel at all. Tam Dalyell launched into a learned disquisition on the fate of a flightless bird, the Pink-footed Boobie, on Aldabra Atoll. And Norman Lamont was quite jolly about the joys of life as a born-again backbencher.

But there was also a sadness behind some of my Awkward Squadmates' stoic resignation to marching out of step. Sir Julian Critchley may be famous for the gaiety of his cynicism, but revealed a depth of idealism few would suspect. He felt wasted.

Nicholas Winterton, whose Maudesfield constituents probably think their maverick MP was born to rage against administrations of every colour, admitted that at first he had desperately wanted to be a minister. When his heroine, Margaret Thatcher, failed to oblige, there followed for him many months of intense bitterness and pique.

Lord Wakeham, for some years his Chief Whip, told me he thought Winterton might once have made a very good minister.

It is hard to think of a sharper contrast than that between the storming populism of a Winterton, and the mild and academic reflectiveness of Frank Field.

Field has the manner of a brilliant young curate, condemned to a rough parish. The Birkenhead MP, who survived Militant plots to remove him and whose thankless destiny has been to think (for Labour) the unthinkable on Social Security, told me of a strange childhood memory. He recalled: walking, solitary but far from lonesome, through meadows, "to see, where other people were".

Ken Livingstone, despairing of team work, finding the Commons a bear-pit "of 651 competing egos". Lord Tebbit thought team-work essential and insisted he liked nothing better than to march in step. Alan Howarth was "haunted" by the faces of Tory friends who had helped him, now that he had gone over to Labour. Julian Critchley relied on the esteem of the few he respected rather than the cheers of his local Conservative club.

Teresa Gorman told me she's been an entertainer from the cot, and staged Joyce Grenfell impressions for chums, for tuppence, as a girl. But I felt that she, too, was gripped by an under-

clared rage at being confined to the jester's role. Lord Wakeham fondly described the Awkward Squad as a collection "of absolute bastards".

And what do I think? Looking for innate qualities shared by rebels is a false trail. Often I found that what "turned" a man or woman into a political loner was an event. Circumstances had provoked a single rebellion: having rebelled they found the Earth continued in its orbit and they were no less well-regarded for their act of defiance. So the taste for independence grew.

As any schoolteacher knows, once a boy or girl begins to see themselves — and be seen by others — as a rebel, the habit sticks. Perhaps we are all the same larvae, and whether we turn into workers, queen bees or drones depends on whether fate happens to slip a little royal jelly into our diet. Was it Aristotle who said that "it is by acting bravely that we become brave"? It may be that it is by acting rebelliously that we become rebels.

John Wakeham's insistence, to me, that a whip seeks at almost any cost to avert the initial act of rebellion, seemed to me to reflect the secret fear that must always stalk the corridors of civil authority: order is maintained mostly by bluff. If more than a handful of rebels, the State totters.

I finished the interviews teased in my mind by this question: are we, in asking why people disobey, asking the right question? Perhaps we should ask why people obey.

The Awkward Squad starts on July 8 at 8.45am on Radio 4

Teresa Gorman has been an entertainer from the cot

A fable of the future: how political actions can have some very unexpected consequences

Back to the future or Kaiser Bill's Europe

William Rees-Mogg

Let me tell the story how a young English Prince became the first Emperor of the new Europe, "Unser gute Kaiser Wilhelm", as his loving German subjects call him. It is an historical object lesson that the consequences of political actions are far more important than anything intended at the time. The process all started with the Scottish referendum of 1978, or perhaps two years earlier when the English first demonstrated their revived nationalism, long since buried in the United Kingdom and the Union Jack, by flaunting the cross of St George in the Euro 96 matches.

In 1998, as will be well remembered, a large majority of Scottish voters supported the proposal for a Scottish parliament with taxing powers: the Welsh, by a smaller margin, voted for their relatively impotent assembly. By the end of the year there were three parliaments in Britain, with a fourth promised for Northern Ireland. England was the only nation without its own parliament, as the Scottish, Welsh and Irish members still voted on English matters at Westminster. Although the Conservative Party had not done as badly as expected under John Major's leadership in the 1997 general election, it had still lost. His successor, John Redwood, took a Euro-sceptic and English nationalist line which became increasingly popular.

By the following general election the inherent contradictions in Tony Blair's policy of constitutional reform, and the continued weakness of the European economy, resulted in the great Tory victory of 2002. John Redwood won on an uncompromisingly English nationalist platform, promising the establishment of an English parliament, with a smaller "United Kingdom" parliament to deal mainly with foreign affairs and defence. The following year saw a Scottish backlash, with a massive Scottish nationalist victory in the Edinburgh parliament. The Union Jack was pulled down everywhere in

Scotland, and in England as well, and only remained as a rather pathetic symbol of Unionist loyalty in Belfast. The first act of the new Scottish government was to make application for full independent membership of the European Union. In the meantime, three other European regional parties had reached a similar stage: the Christian Social Union in Bavaria broke away from their CDU partners in 2001; the Catalans decided to opt for full independence inside Europe in 2002; in the same year Umberto Bossi's Northern League had obtained more than 50 per cent of the vote in ten electoral districts in northern Italy. All three joined Scotland in demanding direct membership of the European Union. In Bavaria, a referendum campaign led by Dr Hans Jorg, the great-grandson of the heroic anti-Prussian statesman of 1869, won a massive victory under the slogan, "A free Bavaria in a free Europe". Following the demands of Scotland, Lombardy, Catalonia and Bavaria, there came the Basques, Wales, Ulster, the two ex-Belgiums and even Prussia.

The inter-governmental conference (IGC) of 2004 had to be held in Luxembourg because that was the only state in the European Union which was not faced with some claim for regional autonomy. At the IGC over 30 claimant nations were represented as observers. Strict security had to be observed, as the IRA were opposed to the permanent division of Ireland into two different member states of the European Union, even though they were pleased at the final

break with Westminster. The outcome of the IGC was the Treaty of Luxembourg which provided for a European Union of no less than 50 states, of which 16 were German speaking. As one excited delegate put it: "We have taken Europe back behind Napoleon", but others saw it as taking Europe back into the Middle Ages. It soon became apparent that the new federal Europe had indeed returned to an 18th-century balance of power. Germany had again be-

come a group of little states, though with Prussia re-emerging and with Bavaria as a significant south German power. The two largest surviving states were France and England; when they were in agreement, which was rare, no one else could stand against them. Southern Italy was very poor, in the absence of subsidies from the North: there was even a proposal to return the Papal states to the Pope. Without Catalan industry, Madrid was bankrupt, but Catalonia became one of Europe's great centres of economic growth. The French and Spanish Basques began blowing each other up.

The main problem proved to be that the new Europe of 50 states lacked a focus of loyalty, and particu-

larly a focus in the European tradition. In 2005 John Redwood made a serious mistake. He put the Treaty of Luxembourg to the English people in an English referendum. To his surprise, and against his advice, they voted "Yes", preferring to be one of the two largest states in a federal Europe of the 50 to being a lonely little nation outside. Nevertheless English nationalism remained a strong political force, and the Conservatives were comfortably able to win the general election of 2006 on the slogan of "No European taxes".

It was the Prince of Goldsmith, Grand Duke of the Most Holy Roman Empire, who provided the answer. He arranged what has been called the Royal Entente. Its first provision was that the Goldsmith estate, now known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold, should finance divorces at a rate of \$50 million for each and every European Princess who might wish for one. Those heirs to European thrones who felt that it would be prudent could put \$20 million down to be invested for their future matrimonial costs.

There was also an inner agreement, the private compact. Prince William agreed to marry, and divorce, in succession, all the senior princesses of Europe, thus acquiring the claims to the single European throne of each of the present European royal families, while providing each family with an endowment of \$50 million. The English parliament in 2005 repealed the vulgar and obsolete "no popery" provisions of the Act of Settlement. Prince William obtained the full dispensation and

necessary divorces from the Pope which had so unwisely been denied to his forebear King Henry VIII. The Prince's final and present wife, by a fortunate coincidence, is a Spanish Princess called Catherine of Aragon.

The French parliament was, with some difficulty, persuaded to enact that most of French history, including Joan of Arc and the French Revolution had been an unfortunate mistake, and that the Plantagenet claim to the throne of France had always been a good one. The Plantagenets were, after all, a French family who happened to be Kings of England. Hanover repealed the Salic law, and reinvested Queen Victoria as the rightful Queen of Hanover, the throne going by descent from her to Prince William.

Prince Charles decided to become the King Father of England, in order to facilitate this fortunate chain of events. Prince William, having by then acquired most of the thrones of Europe, or at least a reversion to them, accepted from the Bavarian Royal Family the renunciation of their Stuart claim to the throne of England itself. The Hapsburgs were restored to the throne of Austria, and given back their palaces in Vienna.

That was how it came about that the Electors of the Holy Roman Empire reversed the decree of dissolution of 1806. They denounced it as a wrongful act done under the influence of the usurper Bonaparte. They then elected William, King of England, Scotland, Wales, France and Hanover as the new Charles-magne, and successor to the Emperor Augustus. The Emperor Wilhelm now presides as a constitutional monarch over a peaceful and United Europe of 50 quiet little states. He has decided to make the Palace of Versailles his main home and is turning Louis XIV's park back into private pleasure gardens, but in return will be opening the gardens of Buckingham Palace to the public.

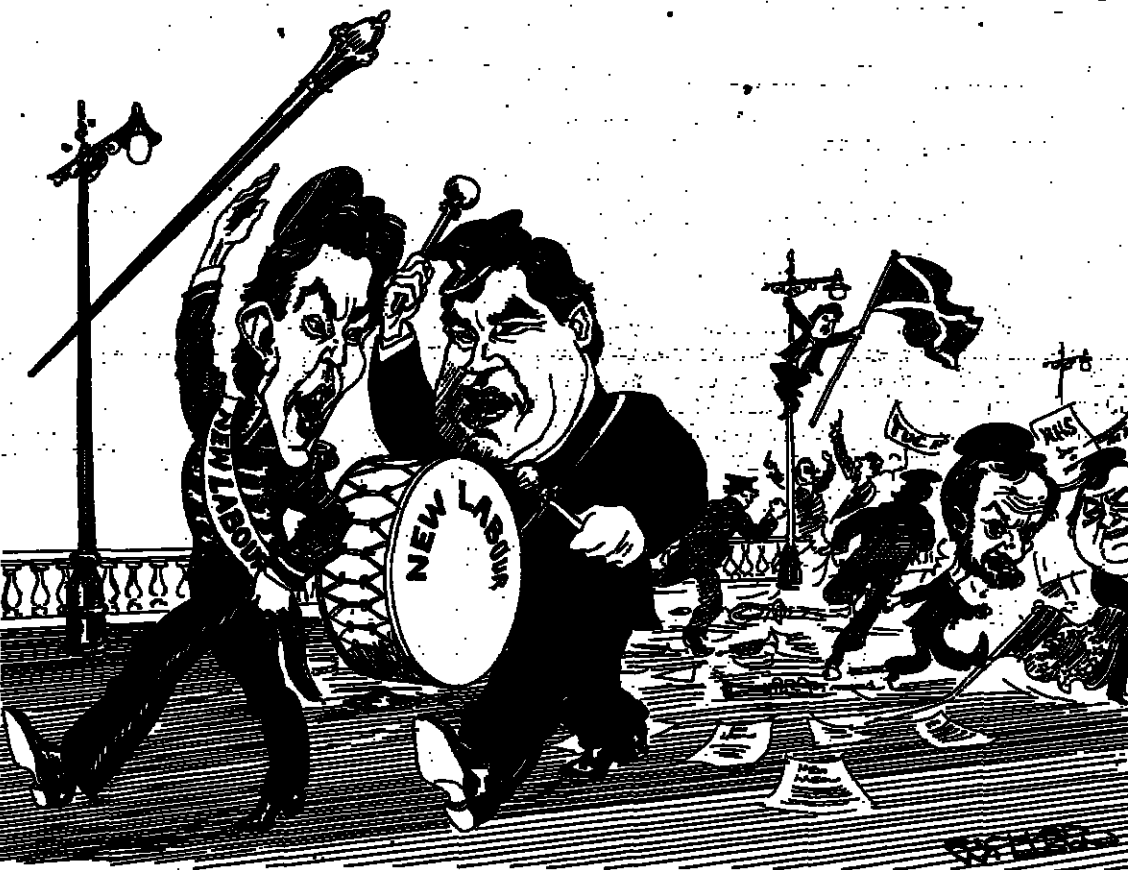
Is Blair a step too far ahead?

Labour's leader this week unveils his 'millennium pledges', but is the party behind him?

Tony Blair has turned into the most ruthless and determined leader in Labour history. None of his predecessors — not Attlee nor Gaitskill at the height of their powers — would have brushed aside the doubts of party colleagues and trade union leaders as he has.

By comparison, Margaret Thatcher in her opposition years from 1975 to 1979 was a timid seeker after party consensus. No wonder the Tories are so muddled about how to deal with Mr Blair. The crucial question is not whether Mr Blair is genuine in trying to turn Labour into a "new" party — he is — but whether, in John Redwood's phrase, he is "pushing his party far too far against its instincts". The shift involves much more than the row of the past week over the promise to hold referendums for Scottish and Welsh devolution, symbolic though these are of current tensions. More important has been the series of policy statements, which, almost every other day, have dropped or limited existing commitments on, for example, education, pensions, and labour laws. Comprehensive schools are to be reformed; existing grammar schools retained if parents want them; Trident is to be kept and, if necessary, used (to Robin Cook's audible discomfort).

This process will culminate this week with the publication of a 10,000-word draft manifesto setting out priorities for government defined by Gordon Brown's campaign to shed Labour's "high-tax and high-spending" image. Mr Blair will claim that Labour would not have to raise public spending, and hence the tax burden, above the levels planned by



the Tories. This is linked with a change of strategy. There will be no more grand sounding visions, such as the vacuously Kennedyesque "young country".

There is now a consciously incremental approach, based on the view that voters are looking for promises, however modest, which they believe can be achieved. As Mr Blair wrote in the June issue of *Prospect* magazine: "Winning trust depends on showing vision and competence. And proving competence is done in the details as much as the big vision".

Consequently, on Thursday, Mr Blair will unveil what he likes to call flagship commitments, which are being rechristened "millennium pledges" to catch the headlines. These are intended to reconcile the overall caution with the need to convince

voters that Labour could make a difference in power.

The pledges include using money from scrapping the assisted places scheme to limit class sizes to 30 or less for five to seven-year-olds; using a one-off windfall tax on the utilities to finance training for the young and long-term unemployed; detailed plans to cut youth crime; and transferring money from NHS administration to reduce waiting lists. Apart from the windfall tax, all the pledges are to be financed from savings within existing budgets. These are always easier to promise than to deliver and can be wishful thinking.

This approach can be caricatured

as a kinder-gentler version of Thatcherism, though it is based on a strategy for improving the nation's skills and ability to compete. Left-wing intellectuals are already complaining about Mr Blair's acceptance of global free markets and his reluctance to embrace comprehensive economic and social, as well as constitutional, change. Their doubts do not matter. Mr Blair understands the aspirations of the Middle England voters which Labour has lost since 1979 more than they ever will.

More important is whether he is losing touch with his MPs. The Scottish row has revealed the suspicions of many Labour members about a lack of consultation and high-handed style. It is not just Left-wing critics or the already disenchanted such as Paul Flynn. Many main-

stream spokesmen complain of arrogance and aloofness, as well as being uneasy about the shift away from Labour roots in the unions and the public sector.

The referendum row may also make a post-election deal with the Liberal Democrats harder. The Scottish Lib-Dem MPs have been closest to Labour but they will now have to answer party charges that Mr Blair cannot be trusted.

But Mr Blair and his allies are not just some Leninist vanguard who have hijacked Labour. The novel feature of Blairism is that he has leaptfrogged the activists and enfranchised the mass of the party membership through the ballots which overwhelmingly approved the rewriting of Clause Four last year.

Similarly, now, this week's mini-manifesto will not only be debated by the party conference in three months' time, but it will then be put to a ballot of the 380,000 individual members. They are in every sense Blair's people, not least because a third have joined under his leadership. This process has been dubbed "getting your betrayal in first" — committing the whole party to policies before an election so that activists cannot cry betrayal later when Labour is in office. Mr Blair wants to avoid the fate of the last two Labour governments, in 1964-70 and 1974-79, which were undermined by charges of betrayal from activists who then pushed the party sharply to the Left when it lost office.

Mr Blair is right to avoid woolly fudges and compromises in policy-making, even if it involves bruised feelings now. Thursday's statement matters too much, and on the basic policies, he is correct. But he cannot govern without the active support of Labour MPs. He has to start building bridges, now. He would be well advised, for example, to allow this autumn's Shadow Cabinet election to go ahead rather than risk an explosion of frustration in the pre-election period. Mr Blair will need his MPs behind him when it matters, during the inevitable squalls and storms of office.

Donor kebab

THERE will be an awful *froidure* in Whitehall tonight as John Major, along with senior Tory officials, meets the Serbian-born businessman whose donations to the Conservative Party are currently the subject of a highly sensitive internal inquiry. Despite the Central Office probe, which is trying to discover the exact provenance of his wealth, Zoran Tancic has been invited to a do for a clutch of the

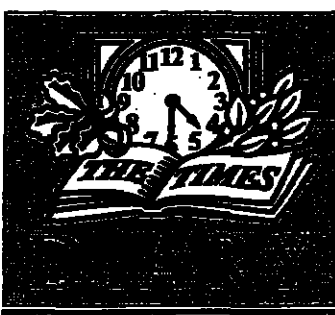


Conservative Party's biggest donors.

It was in May that the party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, announced an inquiry into Tancic, who is reported to have given up to £50,000, in 1994, and another £10,000 already this year to the party. Mawhinney vowed to return the cash if there was any basis to allegations that Tancic was linked to nastier Bosnian-Serb elements, including Radovan Karadzic.

The allegations have proved wholly without foundation, but still the inquiry has not been wrapped up. This makes it very odd that Tancic has been invited by the Prime Minister, Mawhinney and Lord Hambro, the party's senior treasurer, to tonight's bash. The form at these things, after all, is for the guests to make further donations as they leave.

Central Office is exasperated at Mawhinney's failure to tie up the case quickly. "We have allowed Mr Tancic's name to be dragged across the press without publicly exonerating him," says a Central Office official. What is more, the problem of not releasing the results of the



inquiry becomes even more acute. Labour will pay for them even louder. But to release them would set a terrible precedent for the Tories who would then be pressed into endless inquiries into every foreign businessman whose coin ever crossed their palm.

● Literary agents will be suffering from sore dialling fingers this morning as reports emerge that Mark Lucas, one of the sharpest in his business, is striking out on his own. Until now the star name at Peters Fraser and Dunlop, his departure may rob the firm of some serious business. In recent years, Lucas has handled such prize properties as the former SAS soldier Andy McNab, Carol Thatcher, the former hostages John McCarthy and Terry Waite

as well as the former derivatives trader Nick Leeson.

Off key

TESTY scenes at the Royal Opera House on Friday evening when a staff meeting erupted into a barrage of abuse aimed at the senior management. Sitting up on stage were Jeremy Isaacs, general director of the Opera House, and Mike Morris, director of personnel. After initial skirmishing, the staff who are facing severe cutbacks turned.

"You have ripped the heart out of a once great institution," cried one, to which Isaacs responded with a curt "I don't agree with that." The evening rounded up with staff baying out, calling the whole swath of senior management "pathetic". Little wonder that Morris, who has grappled mightily with the prehistoric backstage working practices of the Opera House said that the place was run "as if Thatcher had never happened".

● Unfair accusations of misanthropy have been levelled at Cubby "Feed Me" Broccoli, the hefty producer of the James Bond films, who died on Thursday. Just one incident should put these stings to rest: When Maurice Binder, designer of



"Feed Me" Broccoli and friend

the opening titles to the Bond films, died in 1991 Broccoli not only threw a terrific memorial party at the National Film Theatre but also did his best: Don Corleone, handing out £20 notes to all the children present. He did not even seem to mind when the grabber parents sent the shavers in for seconds of Broccoli's largesse.

Stop thief

STOLEN: one highly personal Cabinet Minister's diary and some

scorching cooking recipes. William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and MP for Bristol West, had parked his Renault Espace in Bristol city centre. Returning to his car, however, he found both his diary and a briefcase containing the proofs for his wife Caroline's forthcoming cookery book had been snatched.

Now he is appealing to the larcenists. "The briefcase contained nothing of value or to do with the Government," he said, "but my diary was kept at the time of my mother's death last year so I miss it very much."

Dressdown

WHEN President Mandela hits London next week for his state visit, he has been told by Buckingham Palace that when it comes to dress code, he is a free agent. Though his taste in suits is immaculate, Mandela has a worrying weakness for garish shirts.

The lax dress regulations, however, will just add to the visit's lengthening list of idiosyncrasies most of them requested by Mandela himself.

Instead of the usual white tie state banquet to reciprocate the Queen's banquet at the Palace, the



Mandela: colourful dresser

president will have the Royal Family to lunch at the Dorchester Hotel with trade union officials and businessmen. Hours later he is expected to do his party trick of jiving on stage, when together with the Queen, he attends a pop concert at the Albert Hall.

Whereas most heads of state spend one day of their visit outside London, Mandela has chosen instead to head for Brighton, in south London, to meet the locals.

P-H-S



IRELAND SHOULD LEAD

Governments must solve problems in their own backyards

With the beef war now simmering rather than boiling and the summer summit season coming to an end, the governments of the EU can turn to graver matters. Today the Irish Government takes over the EU's rotating presidency from the Italians and has set itself a forbiddingly serious order of business. The priorities proclaimed for the next six months are drugs and jobs. It is bitterly ironic that Ireland should think to lead Europe in a fight against drugs in the week after the country's leading investigative journalist, Veronica Guerin, was murdered by criminals whose trafficking she had done so much to expose.

Veronica Guerin's murder was not just the end of a brave and principled life, it marked the impotence of the Irish Government to deal with the professional criminals whose arrogance and brutality have gnawed at the security of the Irish state and its citizens. Better co-operation among the nations of the EU may make some drug-dealing easier to tackle, but the restoration of order in Ireland's lawless criminal ghettos will come from determined action within the state's borders, not agreements across them. A more efficient police force, tighter bail laws, and more certain punishment are within the power of the Irish Government and will do more to strengthen the fight against drugs and honour Veronica Guerin's memory than any number of communiqués.

As for jobs, although Ireland is one of the EU's fastest growing economies it is also one of those with the highest levels of unemployment. And as with drugs, so with jobs, it is government actions, such as Britain's low

tax and light regulation regime, not inter-governmental agreements such as the social chapter, which are seen to make a difference for the better.

In the mature phase of European integration, merely making agreements is not enough: their architects should be able to show that collective action can reach parts of the problem or achieve success which national governments alone cannot match.

We may search in vain the speeches outlining Ireland's specific priorities for the presidency from the Foreign Minister Dick Spring and his colleagues. The EU's smaller states, when they represent the Union outside its borders, feel under a mistaken obligation to convince the world that the Union has a fully-fledged foreign policy. Since EU joint foreign policy is anything but fully-fledged, this error only produces diplomatic incoherence in industrial quantities. Is Mr Spring's time really well spent intoning sentences such as: "Recent events in Liberia and Burundi have reminded the international community of how important it is to provide a peaceful alternative to the violent pursuit of change in Africa."

In the debate over the revision of the Maastricht treaty, the size of the state affects the national view. Ireland is the first small nation to take the chair of the "Maastricht II" negotiations, and it will bring into the open half-concealed differences of interest between the big and small states. The voice of the smaller states has been missing from the drifting and directionless debates over the treaty so far. On those points and others the inter-governmental conference needs clarifying realism above all else.

A QUESTION OF DEGREE

Inflation in first degrees devalues the gold standard

The natural tendency of each generation is to believe that its successors have life too easy. Thus the news that many more undergraduates are winning first-class and upper-second degrees automatically raises suspicions that marking has become more lenient rather than students more industrious. In this case, however, those who fear that the currency is being devalued have some genuine ground for concern.

A new study, to be published later in the summer, finds potentially alarming evidence of degree inflation. The Higher Education Quality Council studied 300,000 students' degree results at the old universities from 1973 to 1993. It found that the proportion winning Firsts had risen from 11 to 14 per cent; and the proportion gaining a 2:1 was up from 31 to 44 per cent. Now a clear majority of graduates leave university with the critical job-winning degree: a 2:1 or better.

There must be some force for the argument that students are working harder. Until the early 1980s, schoolchildren were told that if they went to university, they would get a good job; if they went to Oxford or Cambridge, they could choose which good job to take. The recession of 1981-83 was the first in which even Oxbridge graduates found themselves involuntarily unemployed.

But this coincided with a huge rise in the numbers of young people going on to higher education. In the period under study, undergraduate numbers doubled. Other things being equal, then, it would be odd if the proportion gaining top degrees had not halved — assuming that the new entrants

were at the lower end of the ability range for university. So it is difficult to imagine how performance could have risen quite as sharply as the HEQC study has detected.

It is rather easier to imagine how standards could have slipped. Continuous assessment plays a greater part in degree classification: which is good news for students who perform badly under pressure, but also for those who copy out someone else's essay. Given that most postgraduate study now demands a First, and many jobs a 2:1, there must be pressures on examiners to tend towards the charitable. The subject that showed least improvement in the study, civil engineering, is the one whose standards are most rigorously policed by an outside professional body.

The question will not be resolved until a qualitative study is made of examination papers and answers then and now. But if there is even the slightest slippage in standards, it is a serious matter. Not only is it unfair to those who won good degrees at a time when they denoted excellence; it is also dangerous for the health of the university system and the jobs market.

In America, a first degree is such a devalued currency that almost any ambitious employee needs to go on to graduate school to win a good job. Britain is already moving that way. But the quality of its first degrees has always given it a competitive advantage. For a few jobs, a second degree is essential: for many others, it is little more than a way of marking out talent. That could and should be the task of first degree classification. Universities must ensure that it remains so.

BLOOD AND BONE

The Becket casket bears a potent part of our history

Great art may transcend borders in its capacity to inspire, but there are some works that speak with special power to the soul of a nation. This country is diminished by the loss of those works that are part of its patrimony and contain something of the essence of these islands. The dramatically beautiful reliquary casket (or chassee) which Sotheby's auction this Thursday and which is believed to have held the blood and bones of St Thomas à Becket is such a work.

Becket's story and the casket are part of the blood and bones of Britain. In the days before the casket is auctioned, every muscle must be strained to keep it on these shores so that future generations can meditate on the martyr who inspired such beauty.

Becket's story is as encrusted and overlaid with myth and interpretation as the casket is with crystals and copper. The manner of his murder and the remarkable power of his cult have overshadowed a life that eludes easy assessment but embodies great, and very English, virtues.

Becket was a man who rose by talent, placed principle above connections and stood out against centralising and arrogant authority. He gave his life, in the words of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, "to the Law of God above the Law of Man". In so doing he set an example for the many English martyrs who fought for conscience and whose sacrifices helped define the character of a nation sturdy for liberty, from the Roman Catholic St Thomas More to the Protestants whose inspiring passion was chronicled by John Fox.

Becket's story inspires men far beyond England. The image of the Archbishop slaughtered in his own cathedral for defying temporal authority captured the attention of Christendom, not just for the English archetypes who people Chaucer's pages but for

the faithful across Europe. It is estimated that over 100,000 pilgrims travelled to Canterbury in one year in the 14th century making Becket's shrine more popular even than St James Compostella in Spain.

But strong though Becket's hold on the hearts of many Medieval Christians may have been, his blood left its mark most obviously in England. Becket's secular career, from low-born Londoner to Chancellor, is one of the earliest examples of the primacy of merit over birth that gave England its vigour. Becket's subsequent translation from politician to priest exemplifies the English capacity to enjoy worldly fruits before deferring to higher duty, a trait common to men as woven into the nation's sense of itself as Henry V and John Donne.

Most powerfully of all, Becket's death at the hands of Henry II's knights has lived in the English imagination as a sacrifice for the right to resist absolute authority. Becket's jealous defence of the Church's privileges and especially his own as Archbishop of Canterbury may have had its roots in pride. Becket's pretensions certainly caused Gilbert Foliot, his rival and Bishop of London, to brand Becket an "ass". But Becket's stand against the over mighty monarch and his insistence on the Church's autonomy won him persistent and unyielding devotion.

The history of England's evolution has been the story of liberties wrested and defended from Crown and Court. The efforts of men from De Montfort through Pym and Hampden to the glorious revolutionaries of 1688 have their aboriginal echo in Becket's stand against the tyranny of his times. The chaste that goes under the hammer on Thursday may not be the spiritual art of British independence, but it bears far more than just the disputed fragments of a distant saint's body — it holds a poignant, powerful part of our history. It must be saved.

Morality of cuts in asylum benefits

From the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool and others

Sir, The Home Secretary is of course correct to say (letter, June 25) that the authority of the courts is subordinate to Parliament [see letters, June 28]. The Court of Appeal accepted as much in its ruling on asylum benefit cuts on June 21. However, Mr Howard signally fails to respond to the strong moral basis of the appeal judgment. It is a long time since the judges have made such a vigorous moral case on a political matter.

Where we differ from the Home Secretary is in his continued reiteration of the view that all asylum-seekers who fail to obtain the increasingly difficult status of refugee are simply seeking to obtain benefits or "better themselves economically". All the agencies who deal consistently with large numbers of the refugees refute this hypothesis.

Most people who leave their homes do not wish to do so. Most of them come from countries or situations in which there are civil unrest, detention, extra-judicial killings and even outright conflict. Last month, for example, when a number of church leaders visited a north London church housing asylum-seekers without benefits, they found refugees from Somalia, Chechnya, Romania, The Gambia and Nigeria sleeping on the floor.

That particular church has cared for dozens of asylum-seekers over the last three months. Its minister, the Reverend Lance Stone, says it is perfectly clear to him that they are from genuinely dangerous situations and that they do not fit the label of economic migrants which Mr Howard is so determined to fix upon them.

An ecumenical report issued this week by the Catholic diocese of Westminster estimates that 13,000 such asylum-seekers are now without benefit, living off friends or relatives. It forecasts that this figure may rise to 47,000 by the end of the year.

Peter Lilley, speaking in Southwark Cathedral on June 13, said: "We have a duty to help those unable to help themselves. The rich must help the poor; the healthy must help the sick; the strong support the weak. This is an obligation. Conservatives accept just as do other parties... It is part of our common Christian heritage in this country."

We could not have put it better ourselves. We trust the Government will think again about its plans to deny benefits to large numbers of asylum-seekers.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID LIVERPOOL,

TRICHARD OXON,

DAVID RIPPON,

TROY SOUTHWARK.

The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, SE1. June 27.

Britain and the EU

From Mr John Davis

Sir, Mr Leolin Price, QC (letter June 26), says that "we did not join the Community in 1973 with a view to creating a government superior to ours". Maybe not, but that is what we did. This would have been obvious at the time to anybody troubling to read the Treaty of Rome.

Mr Price suggests that the only remedy is to leave the Union. If one wishes to eliminate this particular tier of government he is probably right.

I am beginning to feel that, with Empire gone, with everybody struggling to find a solution to the problems of Northern Ireland, and with the Welsh and Scots increasingly pressing for a degree of self-government, the UK Government may have become an expensive, anachronistic and irrelevant tier of government too many.

Watching our MPs debating European issues as dishonestly as they did in the 1975 referendum campaign, with their eyes focused on short-term party or personal advantage, does nothing to alleviate this feeling.

Yours faithfully,

J. A. DAVIS, 54 Woodlands Road, Bookham, Surrey. June 26.

From Sir Michael Spicer, MP for Worcestershire South (Conservative)

Sir, Sir William Nicol, in his letter of June 21, is mistaken. The European Research Group has campaigned consistently for a phased repatriation of the common agricultural policy. Our manifesto, *A Europe of Nations*, stated that "the EU should move to return responsibility for agricultural policy and farm subsidies to the Member States".

The common agricultural policy has nothing to do with free trade. On the contrary, it is built on distorted prices, intervention buying and protectionism. It costs the average family £1,450 per year, contributes to terrible poverty in the developing world and penalises Britain uniquely as a food importer with an efficient farming sector.

Sir William is right to remind us that the CAP is the one policy over which the EU has exercised sole jurisdiction for 35 years. There is surely no better argument against extending EU competence into new areas.

Yours faithfully, MICHAEL SPICER (Chairman, European Research Group), House of Commons. June 21.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Global climate change and how it should be tackled

From Dr Jack Barrett

Sir, The letters from Sir John Houghton and others (June 14) and from Mr John Gummer (June 17) about global warming and its connection with carbon dioxide levels suggest that there is a discernible influence of the Church upon the inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change.

That there is even a remote possibility that theologians could have an influence upon a supposedly scientific body such as the IPCC is sufficient to make Galileo turn in his grave. The IPCC's claim to have discerned human influence upon the global climate must be based on foundations of sand if it needs support from an ex-Archbishop and an ex-member of the synod of the Church of England.

Data from NASA satellites from 1979 to the present time have shown that there has been no trend in the Earth's temperature, although the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide has risen by 7 per cent over the period.

The less accurate terrestrial temperature record shows that the main increase in temperature this century occurred in the first 40 years, in which time the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide rose by only 3.7 per cent.

These and other discrepancies are ignored by the IPCC in coming to their premature conclusions concerning further increases in carbon dioxide concentration. The IPCC needs to consider all available data very carefully before advising massive worldwide expenditure on countering a global threat which might not be real.

Yours sincerely, JACK BARRETT, 273 King's Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey. June 25.

From Lord Ezra

Sir, Your correspondents are right to draw attention to the need to tackle with renewed vigour the challenges raised by climate change.

To do so effectively will, I suggest, need a combination of political will and appropriate technology. It was in this context that I was pleased to see that on June 19 the Energy Efficiency Minister, Mr Robert Jones, MP, launched the long-awaited government strategy for combined heat and power (CHP).

Since the then Secretary of State for the Environment first created a target for the wider use of CHP systems in 1990, many of us have pressed for the release of a strategy to underpin it. As

every one megawatt of CHP that is developed has the potential to reduce UK emissions of carbon by 1,250 tonnes, achieving the existing target of five gigawatts of CHP by the year 2000 and looking for an enhanced target to follow are clearly important.

Through my long association with the energy industry, I know what benefits can be secured through combining the skills and resources of the public and private sectors, effective planning and dedicated local leadership.

The real challenge is to find creative ways of promoting such initiatives and, in doing so, to have the will to ensure that administrative barriers do not impede progress.

Real benefits result: industry and local energy consumers get a low cost, competitively priced energy service and employment are stimulated. In the debate about climate change we must not lose sight of the fact that there are opportunities for action that are both good for the environment and good for the economy.

Yours faithfully, DEREK EZRA (Chairman, Sheffield Heat and Power Ltd), House of Lords. June 25.

RSPCA and hardline animal rights

From Lord Mancroft

Sir, On June 22, members of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals voted to change the charity's constitution to prevent people joining. Those who wish to exclude make up the largest number of dog and horse owners in the country, are responsible for the management of most of Britain's wildlife and a large proportion of its farm animals — exactly, you would think, the people you would want in an animal welfare charity. They are the 88,000 members of the British Field Sports Society.

The BFSS has encouraged its members to join the RSPCA in an effort to combat the lurch towards animal rights extremism on the RSPCA's ruling council. It is typical that in his letter (June 21), Ron Kirby, then RSPCA chairman, should seek to deflect awkward questions about this matter by reopening the hunting debate.

While it is true that a majority in Britain are still opposed to hunting, unbiased polling indicates that opposition has fallen from 83 per cent in 1989 to around 65 per cent, and that the downward trend is continuing.

In 1948 the RSPCA's official view was that "the RSPCA consider that the cruelty involved in shooting foxes is such as to make it an unsatisfactory substitute for hunting and that they would prefer hunting to... continue".

Although neither hunting nor shooting have changed since 1948, the RSPCA has, and its present policy has less to do with animal welfare than pandering to extremism.

I wonder how many of those who donate to the RSPCA would continue to do so if they were aware that among this year's candidates for the council most are vegan or vegetarian, one is opposed to all ownership of animals, and another actively seeks a ban on all medical testing involving animals.

The news last week that the RSPCA has entered an alliance with the League Against Cruel Sports Ltd and the International Fund for Animal Welfare, two hardline animal rights groups, will only serve further to alarm the great majority of members, and the Charity Commission, which earlier this year warned the RSPCA to moderate its political campaigns.

It would be ludicrous to suggest that we were trying to turn the RSPCA into a pro-hunting organisation by encouraging our members to join. The hysterical reaction of the RSPCA council has merely served to confirm the validity of our concern.

Yours faithfully, MANCROFT (Deputy Chairman), British Field Sports Society, 59 Kennington Road, SE1. June 28.

Irish objectives

From Mr David Faulk

Sir, The IRA has only one objective, a united Ireland. They started the fight and if they wanted peace more than unity they could have it any time. Handing in of their weapons before they achieve it would indeed be surrender in their eyes.

The British Government has made a rod for its own back by guaranteeing that the Union will persist until a majority in Northern Ireland wills it otherwise. Unionists will beat the rest of us mercilessly until we take that stick away from them.

They will then have no choice but to turn their minds to negotiating an acceptable (possibly federal) union with the South, with the North becoming a secular or even Protestant state and retaining its existing laws on divorce, abortion, etc. Border adjustments would be more readily accepted within a federal structure.

We must face reality, and if that means giving in to terrorism, so be it. It is no more than we did throughout the dissolution of the Empire. In the end the quarrel is between two communities in Ireland and they must sort it out between them — in Ireland.

Yours faithfully, DAVID FAULK (Deputy Chairman), Sedgemoor House, Church Lane, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset. June 28.

Rail safety

From HM Chief Inspecting Officer of Railways

Sir, Your brief report of June 24, headed "Railway to lose safety committee", says that the British Rail Joint Safety Committee "is the only nationwide safety body pooling the views of rail managers and workers".

This is not the case. The Health and Safety Commission's railway industry advisory committee, which I chair, has a broader, nationwide representation. Its membership is currently changing in order to reflect better the composition of a privatised rail industry.

You should also be aware that all railway operators have responsibility for the safety of their operation — not just Railtrack.

Yours faithfully, STAN ROBERTSON, HM Chief Inspecting Officer of Railways, HM Railway Inspectorate, Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge, SE1. June 26.

Minimum wage

From the Head of the Policy Unit, the Institute of Directors

Sir, I read with some surprise and concern ("Minimum pay, minimal issue", *Business*, June 24) that nearly half the organisations recently surveyed by Reed Personnel Services thought that a national minimum wage (NMW) was a good idea.

This conclusion is quite contrary to an extensive policy survey we conducted recently among Institute of Directors members (who are broadly representative of business throughout the United Kingdom).

The responses we received were overwhelmingly opposed to an NMW, though, of course, there was wide recognition that the precise effects were crucially dependent on the level it was set at.

But assuming a rate of, say, £4 an hour, there was a near unanimous view that this would lead to a general loss of competitiveness throughout the economy and, most crucially, job losses. The low-paid, moreover, would have the most to lose.

Some sectors would be directly affected, such as textiles, agriculture, and services, including hotels, security, cleaning and retailing. But others, which currently pay well above £4 an hour, said that an NMW would result in higher costs and poorer competi-

Stones of Stonehenge

From Professor J. D. North, FBA

Sir, Dr Geoffrey Wainwright (review, June 20; see also letter, June 26) maintains that my book, *Stonehenge and the Origins of Astronomy*, must be wrong because it was written before the appearance of the latest English Heritage compendium, *Stonehenge in its Landscape*.

The logic of this escapes me: there is nothing in that splendid book of any relevance with which mine is incompatible.

To even remotely suggest that political power and cosmic religion cannot go together, as Dr Wainwright appears to believe, is to fly in the face of most of human history.

And no, I did not say Stonehenge was an observatory, in the sense he supposed.

All power to English Heritage's elbow, but more openness to its mind. The two are not inconsistent.

Yours faithfully, J. D. NORTH, As from: 28 Chalfont Road, Oxford. June 26.

tiveness, leading to lost business and lower employment.

Our members were also concerned that an NMW would lead to a general upward pressure on wages as employees sought to maintain differentials. In other words, it would be inflationary. Higher inflation would, presumably, be met by higher interest rates which, in turn, could only damage business and jobs.

And, finally, IoD members saw the imposition of an NMW as yet another regulatory burden on business — especially on small businesses — and a clear incentive to slip into the "black economy".

The national minimum wage may appear to be a sweet solution to the issue of low wages. But it is not. It will hurt competitiveness, hamper economic growth (the only way to achieve higher wages on a sustainable basis) and destroy jobs. The message is clear.

Yours faithfully, RUTH LEA, Head of the Policy Unit, Institute of Directors, 116 Pall Mall, SW1. June 25.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Britons at Wimbledon

From Mr Ron Downing

Sir, I consider your report today, contrasting the social backgrounds of Tim Henman and Luke Milligan and headed "Comprehensive defeat for Wimbledon class barrier", to be blatantly classist.

The parents of both players have only done what all good and supportive parents have always done: they have sacrificed much of what they have, in time and money, to encourage positive talent in their offspring. Both teams are to be applauded.

Yours faithfully, RON DOWNING, Westbourne House, Colishall, Norfolk. June 29.

From Mrs Carole Schad

Sir, I neither of your two reporters, who wrote on Saturday that the last all-British match on the Centre Court at Wimbledon was in 1938 (Bunny Austin and Eric Pelly), aware that in 1961 Angela Mortimer played Christine Truman there to win the ladies' title?

Shame on them both. Or don't women count? Yours faithfully, CAROLE SCHAD, 42 Birdhurst Rise, South Croydon, Surrey. June 30.

Kindly explain

From Mr Stuart Alderman

Sir, How about this from the Employment Service in Peterborough? "By foreign language do you mean an overseas language?"

Yours faithfully, STUART ALDERMAN, 7 Heath Farm Court, Grove Mill Lane, Watford, Hertfordshire. June 28.

Legend debunked

From Mr Duncan Bryson

Sir, It seems that it was Black Douglas who witnessed the plucky spider's struggle, not Robert the Bruce (report and leading article, June 22). Perhaps we can now nail another Hollywood fiction. Douglas must have spoken French: more an Eric Cantona than a Billy Connolly.

Yours sincerely, DUNCAN BRYSON, 109 Martin Avenue, Irvine, Ayrshire. June 23.

OBITUARIES

JEAN GIMPEL

Jean Gimpel, historian of technology, died in London on June 15 aged 77. He was born in Paris on October 10, 1918.

IN BRITAIN where he lived, Jean Gimpel was regarded with affection as a writer who launched his ferocious barbs at a number of sacred cows, in particular art, which he saw as having usurped the place of religion. In France, he was respected as the ex-Resistance fighter whose enthusiastic book in 1953 on the builders of medieval cathedrals has sold several hundred thousand copies; and whose socio-economic projections of the future of the world earned him the sobriquet of "the Nostradamus of the 20th century". In the United States, he was the unwelcome prophet (if entertaining lecturer) announcing the decline of its civilisation — "the greying of America".

But in the Third World, from Asia to Africa to South America, Jean Gimpel was sage, Samaritan, and potential saviour, whose studies of medieval technology inspired him to take working models of simple rural machinery around the world to be copied locally. This was the "intermediate technology" so desperately needed to halt that disastrous flight from the land to the town. Gimpel was the exemplar — perhaps more common in France than in Britain — of the intellectual who finds a role as man of action.

Gimpel was born in the 10th arrondissement of Paris. His father René had followed his own father, Ernest, as an art dealer. René was a friend of Monet, Renoir and Proust, and from around 1907 made an annual visit to New York, where he opened an art gallery. He married the youngest daughter of Sir Joseph Duveen.

Jean was the youngest of three sons; the other two went on to found an art gallery, Gimpel Fils, in London. Jean was educated at a preparatory school in Buckinghamshire; in Switzerland at Le Rosey in Rolle, and Gstaad; then at the Lycée Louis Le Grand in Paris. His interests were in history which developed into a particular fascination for the history of technology. As a member of the Société Française d'Astronautique he discussed such subjects in 1939 as how to get to the Moon. He gained, in 1938-39, exclusive French rights to British and American patents, which included air conditioning units, carbon monoxide detectors and electric fly-killers.

The Second World War involved Gimpel in a Resistance group responsible for blowing up factories in and around Paris, with ball-bearing factories a particular target (this added usefully to Gimpel's knowledge of French industry). It was here that Gimpel met his future wife, Catherine — who, as he often pointed out, was senior to him in the Resistance.

After the war Gimpel set up a private laboratory for the scientific study of



Old Master paintings and drawings. This later led to a television programme, shown in Britain under the title *Don't Take It For Granted*, on the difficulties of authenticating Old Masters. Gimpel also began to collect abstract art but suffered a loss of faith in the importance of art, focusing his energies instead on the relevance of technology to evolution.

Lecturing at Yale in 1956 on the parallel evolution of the Middle Ages and the United States, his graph relating two curves, of technological evolution and psychological drive, gave rise to further study and development. The essence of this was that national psychological drive ebbs first, but technological evolution continues for a further period before the final disintegration of society. During this period other nations take up the technology, but with increased psychological drive.

Gimpel's studies of medieval technology (which began on visits to Chartres with his father) were published in 1958 as *Les Cathédrales de France*, and in English in 1961, continuing to sell worldwide in paperback. This work Gimpel was to follow with the publication in 1975 of the book

which appeared in English in 1976 as *The Medieval Machine: The Industrial Revolution of the Middle Ages*.

Meanwhile, Gimpel felt the need to formulate the reasons for his loss of faith in art. *Contre L'Art Et Les Artistes: Ou La Naissance D'Une Religion* was published in its original French in 1968, and in English in 1969, as *The Cult of Art: Against Art and Artists*. *The Times Literary Supplement* was sufficiently concerned by what it saw as the presuppositions and reactionary extremism of the French edition not to wait for the English edition before devoting two columns of an editorial to a denunciation of book and author.

The book provides a well-documented historical catalogue of all the factors which over the centuries have tended, in Gimpel's view, to subvert artists and inflate their egos. He saw the process as beginning with the first separation in terminology of "artisan" and "artist", and accelerated by the quasi-divine status accorded to the artist by some Renaissance philosophers. The development of the art market — with its writers, dealers, competing collectors and auction houses — was also to blame. Art, for

Gimpel, gradually took on a quasi religious status in a predominantly non-religious society, with the artist being regarded as high priest.

Published in 1968 at the end of a confident decade in the art world, this thesis could then easily be disregarded as morally accurate, but irrelevant. Republished in 1991 in revised form simply as *Against Art and Artists*, it gained a new audience in the disillusioned era of postmodernism.

Gimpel's 1976 book on the medieval machine was well received on the whole. But reviewers noted that Gimpel was obliged to use secondary sources, and also doubted exact parallels could be found in the decline of any pair of countries or civilisations. The equivalence in English usage of "industry" to "technology" was questioned; and the relevance of medieval technology to the present problems of the Third World doubted.

So Gimpel set about making these matters practical and relevant. He set up a charity, Models For Rural Development, in 1977. Barriers of language and fixed ideas, he argued, could most readily be overcome by presenting models of "intermediate technology" as used in some other century or country, for local craftsmen to copy, usually in wood.

A true Frenchman who proclaimed, "I am for women and technology, in that order", Gimpel found that it was the women, who do so much of the basic work in rural societies, who know what is needed practically. His early excursions with models into villages in Kenya, Nepal and Senegal were aided by a United Nations grant, but otherwise funded from his own pocket and the charity he set up. He installed the Archimedes screw — one of the earliest kinds of pump, used for raising water from one level to another — in one village, and in others introduced better designs for cooking stoves, horizontal water mills for flour, fish farms, and locally-repairable electric generators. Gimpel recounted his personal experiences on these expeditions in *Le Moyen Age Pour Quoi Faire?*, published in French in 1986.

Gimpel's spread of ideas was aided in traditional form by the carefully-orchestrated Sunday afternoon salons held with his wife, who continued to work every weekday at the Gimpel Fils art gallery, despite her husband's views on artists, while Gimpel spent the morning writing in bed. These salons were normally held for two periods of six weeks in spring and autumn; on Sundays, since Gimpel claimed not to like the muddy country for weekend — this despite his work in the rural mud of the Third World. For all his predictions of doom and decline in the West, Gimpel believed that we live in wonderful times.

Jean Gimpel is survived by his wife Catherine, whom he married in 1956, and by two sons and a daughter.

SIR ARTHUR SNELLING

Sir Arthur Snelling, KCMG, KCVO, British Ambassador to South Africa, 1970-72, died on June 25 aged 82. He was born on May 7, 1914.



UNIVERSALLY known to family, friends and professional colleagues as Peter, although it was not one of his given names, Arthur Snelling was Britain's envoy in South Africa at a time when apartheid was causing difficulties between the two countries. Mutual resentment had been heightened by cancellation of the MCC's cricket tour in 1968 (the so-called "D'Oliveira tour") and by troubles surrounding the Springboks' rugby matches in this country a year later. Pretoria had been pleasantly surprised by the election in 1970 of Edward Heath's Conservative Government, believing that this might mean a more sympathetic ear in Whitehall.

But pressure from the black Commonwealth ensured that the Conservatives in power were less amenable than they had sounded in Opposition. They were reluctant, for example, to supply new military equipment, including helicopters for South Africa's British-built frigates and the latest Cymbeline mortar-locating radar.

This was the delicate situation into which Snelling stepped in the spring of 1970 after spending the previous eight years in Whitehall as a deputy under secretary — latterly as deputy head of the Diplomatic Service.

As an additional complication, he was called upon to hold secret talks in Pretoria with a representative of Ian Smith's rebel government in Rhodesia to explore a possible basis for negotiating a political solution to the crisis there. Snelling's background was that of an economics specialist who represented a new breed of postwar diplomat with practical skills and a leaning towards trade and industry. As such he had a good track record for sceptical analysis and for blunt presentations of the facts to his political masters.

He had already proved himself as High Commissioner in Ghana, 1959-61, the second British envoy in Accra following independence. He was there when Harold Macmillan stopped by at the start of his "winds of change" tour and when the Queen flew out in 1961. She had had to postpone her visit by a year because of the birth of Prince Andrew.

Despite his good personal relations with President Nkrumah, Snelling was privately relaying the first real

warnings to the Commonwealth Office that the mood of self-congratulation over Ghana and the progress towards independence in black Africa could turn out to be premature.

Arthur Wendell Snelling had been born in London, himself the son of a civil servant. His mother had always intended to call him Peter and was therefore somewhat nonplussed when his father returned from the register office to say that he had written him down as Arthur — after himself. He was always known as Peter nonetheless.

His Quaker parents sent him to Ackworth School, a Quaker boarding school at Pontefract, Yorkshire, although he lapsed soon afterwards. From there he went to University College London where he took a first in economics and spent his spare time acting and producing plays.

After graduating in 1934 he worked for two years as secretary of a study group at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) — producing a book on its findings — before joining the Dominions Office. As private secretary to the Duke of Devonshire, then its parliamentary under-secretary, he paid his first visit to South Africa with the Duke and Duchess just before the Second World War.

Retained by Whitehall dur-

ing the war, Snelling accompanied the Government's economic adviser Lord Keynes on visits to the United States and Canada in 1943 and 1944, taking part in lease-lend talks among other things. In 1944 he also acted as joint secretary to the British delegation at the Bretton Woods monetary conference in the US — the conference which was to lay the foundations of a new post-war economic system. He always took great pride in having been a veteran of Bretton Woods.

Then after the war came two tours as deputy high commissioner in New Zealand and South Africa — interspersed with postings in Whitehall.

Snelling became a director of Gordon and Göttsche Holdings, the publications distribution group, on retiring from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1972, remaining on the board for nine years. He was made a Fellow of University College London and a member of the College Council.

He also bought a cabin cruiser which he moored opposite his riverside home at Kingston upon Thames, and spent holidays with his wife quietly navigating England's network of canals. A cheerful man with a keen wit, Snelling died after suffering from emphysema for many years. He is survived by his wife Frieda, who was also a cousin, and by one son.

PROFESSOR HAROLD WOOLHOUSE

Professor Harold Woolhouse, plant scientist, died on June 19 aged 63. He was born on July 12, 1932.

APART from his own research into how plants age and adapt to environmental change, Harold Woolhouse invigorated the botanical department of Leeds University, built up a leading international centre of plant and microbial research at the John Innes Centre, Norwich, and breathed life into the vision of a unified agricultural science park at the Waite Institute in Adelaide, Australia. His was a remarkable career which inspired and stimulated a whole generation of scientists and laid important foundations for the future of plant research.

Harold William Woolhouse was born in Sheffield. His leaning towards science was evident from an early age. Roy Hattersley, a close friend during boyhood, recalls in his autobiography how Woolhouse used to collect butterflies with methodical zeal. Rather than chasing them with a net, he collected leaves that were likely to harbour eggs and watched as the caterpillars hatched, grew and metamorphosed into butterflies, which he then gassed with arrantaria and mounted.

As a teenager he sought a job as a student gardener at the John Innes Institute but

was turned down. Thirty years later he was to be director of this institute. Eventually he got a place as a trainee gardener for the Royal Horticultural Society before attending Reading University where he obtained a BSc in 1955. He then went to Adelaide to study for a PhD in botanical sciences. It was the beginning of a lifelong connection with Australia.

In 1960 he was appointed a junior research fellow in Sheffield University's botany department. He rose rapidly through the ranks and it was no surprise when, at a time of major change in his Sheffield department, he moved to a chair of Botany at Leeds in 1969. There he pursued his interest in plant mineral nutrition and heavy metal tolerance, joining the Zaire River Expedition for a few months in 1974 to investigate vegetation growing in copper-rich soils.

In 1980 he moved to Norwich where he was appointed director of the John Innes Institute and Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of East Anglia. Woolhouse was irreverent, unconventional and fought tirelessly on behalf of the institute, in a difficult climate in which funding for research institutes was being heavily cut. This often involved him sticking his neck out further than the Brahma chickens which he bred as a hobby, and taking



risks that would unnerve most research directors. But he rationalised and restructured the John Innes Institute to protect the interests of long-term basic research. His vi-

sion, energy, and commitment also led to the Sainsbury laboratory being constructed in Norwich and major laboratories from Cambridge and Sussex being relocated there to

make a world centre for plant and microbial research.

Woolhouse did, however, pay a price for dedicating himself to the institute. His own research eventually took a back seat, and his real success lay in creating an environment for others in which their research could flourish.

His winning formula for creating scientific opportunities was transferred to Adelaide in 1990 when he was appointed director of the Waite Research Institute. During the next year he oversaw the merger of Adelaide University with Roseworthy Agricultural College. The two campuses now form the largest agricultural and environmental faculty in Australia.

In 1995 Woolhouse was diagnosed with lung cancer and given a few months to live. With typical bluntness, he announced his illness and retirement to his colleagues by showing them the scans of secondary tumours in his brain, pointing out the shadows. He fought against his illness with remarkable determination and courage, surviving for more than a year against all the odds. It was a precious time, spent initially in Adelaide and subsequently in Norfolk, with his beloved family and garden.

Harold Woolhouse is survived by his wife Leonie, and by two sons and a daughter.

TERREL BELL

Terrel Bell, former United States Education Secretary, died in Salt Lake City on June 22 aged 74. He was born in Lava Hot Springs, Idaho, on November 11, 1921.

APPOINTED by President Reagan in 1981 with the mandate of disbanding the Education Department established by President Carter, Terrel Bell proved to be a very poor executioner. Though he shared some of Reagan's views about the importance of local, as opposed to federal, control of education, he was too passionately concerned with the fate of schoolchildren to revel in the task. Instead, he set about the education of Reagan, with the result that the poor quality of American schools became a national cause célèbre.

Bell began by appointing, against Reagan's wishes, a National Commission on Excellence in Education to make a nationwide study of elementary and secondary schools. The result, published in April 1983, was *A Nation at Risk* — a scathing condemnation

which concluded that "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people... If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today," the report went on, "we might well have viewed it as an act of war."

A Nation at Risk was immediate front page news. Up to that time, Bell had been largely ignored by his fellow Cabinet members, who referred to his department as "the Titanic" and "a bureaucratic joke." Suddenly, he found himself centre-stage. Only a month before, Reagan had been pouring scorn on the Education Department in his weekly radio address.

Now, with public attention focused on the issue as never before, he was forced to take Bell with him on his campaign trail, pleading the case for better schools. Plans to disband the department were abruptly shelved, and Bell fought successfully to avert cuts which had been proposed in federal

spending on education. *A Nation at Risk* — which was as much a shock to Bell as anyone else — resulted in a spate of reform initiatives at state and local level. In successive Administrations, both George Bush and Bill Clinton claimed the title of "Education President."

Though as Bell admitted in an article published in 1993, the American education standards were negligible. The reason, he said, was not only resistance to change on the part of teachers and school administrators, but the fact that none of the reforms dealt with the underlying cause of school failure: the poverty and social conditions in America's inner cities and rural areas.

Bell, who had previously served as Commissioner of Education in the Nixon and Ford Administrations after a career in teaching, left the Government in 1985 to set up his own educational consulting firm. In 1991 he published a book entitled *How to Shape Up Our Nation's Schools*.

Terrel Bell is survived by his wife Betty, and four sons.

Church appointments and retirements

Appointments

The Rev Kevin Bell, Assistant Curate, Church of St George w St James, New Mills (Derby): to be Assistant Curate, Walthamstow, St Saviour (Chelmsford).
The Rev Anthony Boyd-Williams, Vicar, Treariss w Bedlino, Landaff: to be Vicar, Tipton St Mark, Osder Hill (Lichfield).
The Rev Canon Alan Brown, Vicar, St John, Newport, Isle of Wight: to be also Priest-in-charge, St Thomas, Newport, Isle of Wight (Purtonmouth).
The Rev Pat Chapman: to be Priest-in-charge, Mansfield Oak Tree Lane (Southwell).
The Rev Sharon Crossman, Curate, St Andrew, Chippingham w Tytherton Lucas (Bristol): to be Assistant Anglican Chaplain at the University of the West of England (Bristol).
The Rev Dr John Cullen, Director of Training (Winchester): to be also an Honorary Canon of Winchester Cathedral, same diocese.

The Rev Francis Cumberlege, Vicar, St Mark, Tunbridge Wells: to be also Rural Dean of Tunbridge Wells (Rochester).
The Rev George Davies, Industrial Chaplain, Rector, St Michael's, Pibbing and Chaplain, Thurrock Lakeside Shopping Centre (Chelmsford): to be Rector, St Andrew, Morningsham (Southwark).
The Rev Jonathan Eades, Team Vicar, Leek and Meerbrook: to be Team Rector, Wolstanton Team Ministry (Lichfield).
Other appointments
Mr Michael Thompson, Financial Adviser to the Dean and Chapter, Salisbury Cathedral, has been appointed a Lay Canon of Salisbury Cathedral (Salisbury).
Resignations and retirements
The Rev Bob Bagott, Clergy and Widows' Retirement Officer (Bath and Wells): to retire.
The Rev Fred Michael Barnett, Vicar, Watchet and Prebendary of Wells Cathedral (Bath and Wells): to retire.

The Rev Michele Barzey, Assistant Curate, All Saints, Gravely Hill (Birmingham): to resign June 7.
The Rev Josephine Bax, Bishop's Adviser in Renewal (Bath and Wells): retired May 31.
The Rev Paul Berg, Incumbent, Christ Church w Emmanuel, Clifton (Bristol): to retire May 31, 1997.
The Rev Gilbert Cowdy, Vicar, South Molton Team Ministry (Exeter): to retire September 28.
Canon David Dicker, Team Rector, Shaston Team Ministry (Salisbury): to retire October 31.
Prebendary Dennis Goodman, Sub Dean and Prebendary of Wells Cathedral (Bath and Wells): has resigned and is appointed Prebendary Emeritus.
Canon Peter Hawkins, Team Rector, St Alphege, Solihull (Birmingham): to resign August 25.
The Rev Timothy Lawes, Rector, Felmingham, Skepton, Colby, Bannington, Tuitington and Saffield (Norwich): to resign June 30.

The Rev Kenneth Maclean, Vicar, Biston, Mountford w Shrawardine and Fitz (Lichfield): to retire October 1.
The Rev Andrew Salmon, Team Vicar, Bride Valley Team Ministry (Salisbury): to retire January 31.
The Rev David Vail, Vicar, Virginia Water (Guildford): to retire September 30.
The Rev Barry Whitehead, Vicar, St Elizabeth, Aspull (Liverpool): to retire July 31.
The Rev Peter Willis, Rector, Dighton, North Huls, Haberton and Harbertonford: Priest-in-charge, Hatwell w Moreleigh (Exeter): to resign August 14.
Withdrawal of acceptance
The Rev Colin Hodges, Vicar, Lilliput, has withdrawn acceptance of the appointment as Priest-in-charge, Charnminster and Stinsford (Salisbury).
Canon John Edge, Curate, Briercliffe, Burnley (Blackburn): to be Resident Minister, West Felton (Lichfield).

THEIR MAJESTIES AND THE CHILDREN.

100,000 LITTLE GUESTS AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

The King and Queen gave yesterday at the Crystal Palace, in celebration of their Coronation, one of the greatest and most remarkable entertainments ever held. Their Majesties were the hosts of 100,000 of the school-children of London. The fortunate little guests, who were collected from every part of the metropolis, were conveyed to Sydenham in special trains. They began streaming into the Palace shortly after 10 o'clock, and for hours afterwards contingents came every few minutes. Every child had about six hours at the Palace, but the first contingents began to leave two hours after the last arrived. Practically all the children must have seen their Royal hosts, who arrived shortly after 3 o'clock and made a tour of the grounds. Their Majesties had an enthusiastic reception, and the joyous delight with which they were everywhere welcomed was a memorable sight.

But the great feature of the festival, the thing which astonished all beholders, was the amazing perfection of the organisation. It was like the working of a vast and complex machine, and the programme was completed

ON THIS DAY

July 1, 1911

The coronation of George V was on June 22. The days that followed included an open carriage drive through London, a naval review at Spithead and a thanksgiving service at St Pauls. The King wrote of the children's party: "The cheers were quite deafening."

Without, apparently, a single fault. The whole success of the enterprise depended, before all things else, upon the weather. Had heavy rain fallen, the results would have been deplorable; but the clouds cleared away, the afternoon was bright though cool, and the children spent the happiest day of their lives...

The mustering in a single morning of 100,000 children at 500 points scattered all over London county, their concentration at 47 stations, their conveyance by 96 trains to one destination, where they should all arrive between 10.30 and 2.42, their safe return home before nightfall — to carry out a vast and

complicated operation like this without delay, without accident, and practically without a hitch, demanded organising skill and experience, besides discipline and intelligence, of the highest order. The praise due for the complete success of such a military operation, carried through without military experience, must be shared between the organising committee, the teachers, and the railway officials, and no one will grudge to the teachers the highest praise of all. Yesterday's achievement was only made possible by the fact that the children had been well trained in habits of order and discipline.

The boys and girls who had won by ballot the privilege of being the King's guests for the day — that is, about half the children over 12 in the elementary schools of London — assembled at their schools equipped for the day's campaign. Every boy wore a cap of a particular colour, and every girl's hat was trimmed with muslin of a kindred though not identical shade, showing which division they belonged to; and every child in the division had a square linen label sewn on his or her breast of a corresponding colour, and bearing a letter identifying the train allotted for the transport of a particular section of the division. Outside many stations crowds of mothers had gathered to see their children off, but they could not be allowed to go further.

